

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION



State of California
 The Natural Resources Agency
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

PROJECT TITLE	Circle J		
PROJECT LOCATION	T19S R29E Sec 34 & T20S R29E Sec 3, 4 M.D.B.M. Springville Quad	COUNTY	Tulare
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Austin Law		
ADDRESS	1968 South Lovers Lane Visalia, CA 93292	PHONE	(559)557-7077

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Circle J project will reduce excessive fuel loading and eradicate noxious weeds near the City of Springville that pose a threat to life, property, and the environment. This area was selected due to its proximity to private dwellings, critical infrastructure, and its heavy recreational use. The Circle J Ranch is an outdoor education venue for students in Tulare County and holds important recreational value to the residence of Springville. The Circle J project will include the removal of dead and down woody material through the process of pile burning. CAL FIRE crews will fall, buck, and pile dead oak material for pile burning activities. Crews will use chainsaws to limb oaks five feet from the ground surface to prevent future oak mortality in the event of wildfire. CAL FIRE Equipment operators will use a rubber-tracked skid steer with a brush grapple to assist crews in the piling of dead woody material. Broadcast burning activities will be conducted to remove noxious weeds such as *Xanthium strumarium* and non-native thistles. The removal of these noxious weeds will improve the overall health of native grasses and increase the grazing potential on the property. Handlines and or wet lines will be constructed to support broadcast burning activities. All treatment activities will reduce fuel loads near the community of Springville, providing for life safety in the event of a wildfire in the project vicinity and decrease the spread of noxious weeds on the rangelands surrounding Springville, CA.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: **CEQA Guidelines Class 4 Section 15304 Minor Alterations to land**
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under portions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines Section 15304 Class 4, Minor Alterations to Lands. As noted above, this area was selected due to the accumulation of dead and down fuels and their proximity to private dwellings, critical infrastructure, and fire history. Furthermore, project treatment activities will assist in the eradication of noxious weeds that are impeding the health and population abundance of native grasses and fauna. Therefore, the application of CEQA Section 15304 is applicable and appropriate for this environment.

Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, energy, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, populations and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/ traffic, utilities and service systems, or to wildfire. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Tulare Unit Headquarters, 1968 South Lovers Lane Visalia, CA 93292.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

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 4/30/2026
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Mike van Loben Sels, Southern Region Chief Date
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection