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NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

PROJECT TITLE	Mount Zion Demonstration State Forest Lookout and Hazard Tree Removal		
PROJECT LOCATION	Township 6 North, Range 12 East, Sections 4, 9, 10, Mt. Diablo Base and Meridian	**COUNTY**	Amador
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Megan Scheeline, Unit Forester		
ADDRESS	CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit 2840 Mount Danaher Road, Camino, CA 95709	**PHONE**	530-644-2345

Project Description and Environmental Setting:
The CAL FIRE Amador-El Dorado Unit is planning selective tree removal within the Mount Zion Demonstration State Forest (DSF). Mount Zion DSF is located one mile south of the community of Pine Grove in Amador County. It consists of 164 acres of predominantly Sierra mixed conifer forest, dominated by ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*) with interspersed sugar pine (*Pinus lambertiana*), white fir (*Abies concolor*), Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), incense cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), and California black oak (*Quercus kelloggii*). Pockets of chapparal vegetation type exist with the DSF, dominated by manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* species) and chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*).

Mount Zion DSF contains an active fire control lookout, Chief Officer residence, and a parking area and trail network that are open to the public. Trees that obstruct visibility from the fire lookout tower or present a hazard to life and property within the DSF will be selectively removed. Trees will be felled by hand crews using chainsaws and will be disposed of through pile burning, chipping, or hauled off-site for non-commercial use.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- ☒ Categorical Exemption — Type/Section: Class 4, §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 the description for a Class 4, §15304: Minor Alterations to Land Categorical Exemption to CEQA. Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The project consists of removal of trees that impede the view from the fire lookout tower or present a hazard to life and property within the DSF. The activities will not result in the taking of endangered, rare, or threatened plant or animal species, or sedimentation to surface waters. CAL FIRE staff 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, population 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 AEU Unit Headquarters in Camino.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Signed by:
George Morris III
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7/8/2026

George Morris III, Northern Region Chief — Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection