

Notice of Exemption

To: Office of Planning and Research
P.O. Box 3044, Room 113
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044

From: Department of Transportation
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, California 94612

Project Title: Caltrans District 4 Vegetation Management Program Corridor -Contract 3
Wildfire Adaptation Fuel Reduction Vegetation and Tree

Project Applicant: Department of Transportation

Project Location - Specific: Bay Area Wide

Project Location - City: Various Project Location – Counties: Alameda, Contra
Costa, Marin, Sonoma, San Mateo, Napa, Solano

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

The vegetation management will reduce wildfire fuels by establishing shaded fuel break, reducing fuel loads, maintaining fire breaks, and help maintain access of the State Highway System (SHS) during emergency events. These actions help ensure the SHS provides consistent access for emergency first-responders and the public during wildfire events, help create a strategic control line for pre-suppression efforts, and increase the likelihood of successful wildfire containment by lowering fire intensity, severity and slowing the rate of spread. Ultimately, the project will help protect and serve nearby communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources. Treatment objectives include reducing ladder fuels and dense understory vegetation to disrupt vertical fuel continuity. Herbicide treatments will be applied to cut stumps and targeted regrowth under the direction of licensed professionals to maintain long-term hazard reduction. Vegetation Management work will be conducted at 27 Locations along the SHS in eight Bay Area counties.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Department of Transportation

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: Sheryl Sablan

Exempt Status (**check one**):

- ☐ Ministerial (Sec. 21080(b)(1); 15268);
- ☐ Declared Emergency (Sec. 21080(b)(3); 15269(a));
- ☒ Emergency Project (Sec. 21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c));
- ☐ Categorical Exemption. State type and section number: _____

☐ Statutory Exemptions. State code number: _____

Reasons why project is exempt:

Per CEQA, the project qualifies as an Statutory Exemption pursuant to Governor Newsom's wildfire State of Emergency Proclamation (March 1, 2025) and the suspension of applicable CEQA requirements under the California Emergency Services Act, Public Resource Code 21080(b)(4) which involves action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency; and Public Resource Code 15269(b)(c) which also allows specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency.

The project's primary purpose is wildfire-risk reduction through vegetation management and fuel-treatment activities; and includes the following activities that qualify for CEQA exemption pursuant to the Governor's Emergency Proclamation; (a) removal of hazardous, dead, and/or dying trees; and (d) removal of vegetation along roadways, highways, and freeways for the creation of safer ingress and egress routes for the public and responders and to reduce roadside ignitions.

The proposed project purpose and action have been approved by the appropriate Agency Secretary, or their designee, as being eligible to be conducted under the suspension; and will be conducted in accordance with the State Environmental Protection Plan (EPP). The action is therefore exempt from CEQA.

Lead Agency Contact Person: Aaron Francis

Phone number: (341) 766-2444

If filed by applicant:

1. Attach certified document of exemption finding.
2. Has a Notice of Exemption been filed by the public agency approving the project?
☒ Yes ☐ No

Signature:  Date: 09/01/2026 Title: _____

☒ Signed by Lead Agency ☐ Signed by Applicant

Date Received for filing at OPR: _____

Authority cited: Sections 21083 and 21110, Public Resources Code.

Reference: Sections 21108, 21152, and 21152.1, Public Resources Code.

C3_NOE_Not Signed

Final Audit Report

2026-09-01

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Status:	Signed
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