

Notice of Exemption

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

From: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County
1750 E. 4th Street, Suite 100
Santa Ana, CA 92705

Project Title: Caltrans District 12 Vegetation Fuels Reduction Vegetation Management within Orange County

Project Applicant: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County

Project Location - Specific: State Routes; 73, 74, 91, 133, 142, 241

Project Location - City: Various Project Location - County: Orange

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project:

Caltrans District 12 proposes to conduct vegetation fuel reduction treatments, including vegetation management strip vegetation clearance, invasive flashy fuel removal, and vegetation thinning along select routes within the County of Orange to reduce fire risks and promote native plant resiliency.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County

Name of Person or Agency Carrying Out Project: California Department of Transportation, District 12 Orange County

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: PRC 21080 (b)(4); CEQA Guidelines 15269(c); and Government Code 8571)

Reasons why project is exempt:

The project is Statutorily Exempt from CEQA 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, the Government Code §8571 which suspends regulatory requirements that would hinder emergency mitigation efforts; PRC 21080(b)(4) which involves action necessary to prevent or

mitigate an emergency; and Public Resource Code 15269(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: Smita Deshpande Phone number: 949-279-8704

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: Smita Deshpande Date: 9/14/2026 Title: Senior Environmental Scientist

☒ 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.