



E202610000270

County of Fresno

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS AND PLANNING
STEVEN E. WHITE, DIRECTOR

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

TO: ☒ Office of Planning and Research
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ County Clerk, County of Fresno
2221 Kern Street
Fresno, CA 93721

FILED

SEP 03 2026

TIME

9:48am

FRESNO COUNTY CLERK

BY

DEPUTY

For County Clerk's Stamp

FROM: Fresno County Department of Public Works and Planning
Development Services and Capital Projects Division
2220 Tulare Street (corner of Tulare and "M") Suite "A", Fresno, CA 93721

PROJECT TITLE: Environmental Review No. 8980 – California Climate Investments-Shaded Fuel Breaks

PROJECT APPLICANT/SPONSOR: Fresno County Water and Natural Resources Division

PROJECT LOCATION – COUNTY: The project site is located in Eastern Fresno County.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The proposed project consists of establishing two shaded fuel breaks along Auberry Road and Peterson Road in eastern Fresno County. The Auberry Road Shaded Fuel Break totals approximately 315 acres, and the Peterson Road Shaded Fuel Break totals approximately 234 acres (see attached map). Vegetation treatment will generally occur within 200 feet of each road centerline, creating a 400-foot-wide gap in fuel continuity. Standing dead trees will be assessed and marked by, or under the direct supervision of, a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) for removal and disposal. Smaller-diameter trees and slash may be chipped and broadcast on-site to a depth not exceeding six inches, masticated on-site, or hauled off-site for legal disposal. Woody brush will be removed to reduce horizontal and vertical fuel continuity. Targeted herbicide may be used for long-term maintenance and prevention of ladder-fuel regrowth in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and label requirements. A licensed Pest Control Advisor will recommend the appropriate herbicide, and a contractor holding a Qualified Applicator License will apply the material. Selective retention and spacing of sprouting hardwoods and seedlings and saplings of mortality-impacted species, including ponderosa pine and sugar pine, will promote canopy shade, with treatment targeting an average crown spacing of at least 20 feet. RPFs will prepare detailed treatment plans, layout design, and silvicultural prescriptions. Watercourses and wet areas will be flagged and buffered in accordance with California Forest Practice Rules, with equipment limitation and exclusion zones established as appropriate. The project is intended to reduce community wildfire hazards and promote a healthier forest landscape. Funding is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program as part of the California Climate Investments Program.

NAME OF PUBLIC AGENCY APPROVING PROJECT: Fresno County Board of Supervisors

NAME OF PERSON OR AGENCY CARRYING OUT PROJECT: Fresno County Water and Natural Resources Division

EXEMPT STATUS: Statutory Exemption - CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(c), Emergency Projects

REASONS WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT: The project is statutorily exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15269(c) (Emergency Projects) because the proposed shaded fuel breaks constitute specific actions necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency associated with hazardous dead or dying trees, excessive fuel loads, and continuous woody vegetation along Auberry Road and Peterson Road.

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Treatment will include assessment and marking of standing dead trees by, or under the direct supervision of, a Registered Professional Forester; removal of woody brush and ladder fuels; chipping, mastication, or lawful off-site disposal of treated material; and targeted herbicide application by a qualified applicator to limit ladder-fuel regrowth. Selective retention and spacing of sprouting hardwoods and certain seedlings and saplings will preserve shading while reducing horizontal and vertical fuel continuity. These treatments will reduce wildfire hazards and risks associated with hazardous tree failure along existing road corridors and near surrounding communities, thereby protecting public health, safety, and welfare and promoting a healthier forest landscape.

The project will include measures to avoid impacts to watercourses and wet areas through resource flagging, buffers, and equipment limitation or exclusion zones, as appropriate. The project will not negatively affect scenic resources or wetland habitats or expose people or the environment to hazardous waste materials. No significant adverse environmental or cumulative impacts were identified.

LEAD AGENCY

CONTACT PERSON: Alyce Alvarez

AREA CODE/TELEPHONE: (559) 600-9669

If filed by the 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: _____

Chris Motta, Division Manager

Date: _____

8/26/2026

- ☒ Signed by Lead Agency
☐ Signed by Applicant

Date received for filing at OPR: _____

Environmental Review No. ____: California Climate Investments-Shaded Fuel Breaks

PROJECT APPLICANT/SPONSOR: Fresno County Water and Natural Resources Division

LOCATION: Eastern Fresno County

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The Auberry Road Shaded Fuel Break totals approximately 315 acres and the Peterson Road Shaded Fuel Break totals approximately 234 acres (see attached map). The shaded fuel breaks target fuel reduction within 200 feet of road centerline, creating a 400-foot gap in fuel continuity. Standing dead trees will be assessed and marked by, or under the direct supervision of, a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) for removal and disposal. Smaller diameter trees and slash may be chipped and broadcasted, not to exceed 6" in depth, and/or masticated on-site. All treated material that cannot be chipped or masticated on-site may be hauled off-site and legally disposed. Woody brush will be removed to eliminate horizontal and vertical fuel continuity. Targeted herbicide will be utilized for long-term maintenance and the prevention of ladder fuel regrowth in accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and label requirements. A contracted licensed Pest Control Advisor will recommend the appropriate herbicide in accordance with State Law and regulations. A contractor with a Qualified Applicator License will apply the materials.

Selective retention of sprouting hardwood tree species will be retained to expedite the shading of the fuel breaks. Retention and spacing of seedlings and saplings of mortality impacted tree species such as ponderosa pine and sugar pine will be favored. Treatment shall target an average of at least 20-foot crown spacing of retention trees. When feasible, limbing of retention saplings will be done to remove ladder fuels and accelerate vertical growth.

RPFs will also draft detailed treatment plans, layout design, and silvicultural prescriptions for the fuel breaks. Watercourse and wet areas will be flagged and buffered per California Forest Practice Rules with equipment limitation and exclusion zones as appropriate.

These treatments will provide communities with a reduced risk of hazard and promote a healthier forest landscape. Funding for this project is provided by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's Wildfire Prevention Grants Program as part of the California Climate Investments Program.

EXEMPT STATUS: Statutory Exemption – 15269(c) *Emergency Projects*

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REASONS WHY THE PROJECT IS EXEMPT: The project is subject to a statutory exemption due to the hazardous nature of dead or dying trees and excessive fuel loads. No cumulative impacts or significant effects were identified. No scenic resources or wetland habitats (USFW) will be negatively affected, and the project will not expose any people to hazardous waste materials.

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