Reasons why project is exempt: The Project is categorically exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15301(c), Class 1, Existing Facilities, and §15304, Class 4, Minor Alterations to Land.

Class 1 applies because the Project consists of maintenance and minor alteration of existing County highways and streets and their roadside rights-of-way, with negligible or no expansion of existing use. The work is limited to vegetation and hazardous-fuel maintenance intended to preserve roadway function, public safety, evacuation access, and emergency-response access. The Project will not add automobile lanes or expand roadway capacity.

Class 4 applies because the Project consists of minor alterations to existing land and vegetation for fuel reduction. Treatment will include pruning, mowing, brush and ladder-fuel removal, chipping, and selective removal of hazardous or obstructing vegetation. Healthy, mature, scenic trees will not be removed solely for fuel reduction. Fuel-management activities within the distances described in §15304(i) may also qualify under that subsection where applicable.

For purposes of this CEQA approval, the Project is limited to existing County road rights-of-way and the approved treatment buffer and does not authorize new roads, roadway widening, substantial grading, or substantial soil disturbance. Work that would require streambed alteration or that cannot avoid wetlands, riparian habitat, known sensitive biological resources, historical resources, tribal cultural resources, or other environmentally sensitive areas is excluded from this Project unless separately reviewed and authorized under CEQA and applicable permitting requirements. Herbicide use, where proposed, shall comply with all applicable label and regulatory requirements.

Based on the Project as defined and these implementation limits, the County has determined that none of the exceptions to the use of categorical exemptions in CEQA Guidelines §15300.2 apply. Any treatment segment that does not conform to these limits or for which a §15300.2 exception may apply shall not proceed under this Notice of Exemption and shall receive separate environmental review before implementation.

Environmental Assessment Officer: Reed Schenke, P.E., RMA Director/EAO

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: County of Tulare

Project Planner/Representative: Doreen Alvez, Forest Health Coordinator **Telephone:** 559-624-7146

Signature: Gary A Mills Date: Oct 6, 2026 Title: Chief Planner
Gary A. Mills Environmental Planning Division

Signature: Michael Washam Date: Oct 6, 2026 Title: Associate RMA Director, Designee
Michael G. Washam, A.C.E.

☒ Signed by Lead Agency Date submitted to LCI:

NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Fee Exempt per Government Code Section 6103

FILED
TULARE COUNTY

OCT 7 2026

ASSESSOR / CLERK-RECORDER
BY:

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING AT TULARE COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

To: ☒ Office of Land Use and Climate Innovation
1400 Tenth Street, Room 121
Sacramento, CA 95814

☒ Tulare County Clerk
Room 105, Courthouse
221 South Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93291

Lead Agency: County of Tulare c/o Resource Management Agency
5961 S. Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93277(559) 624-7000
Attn: gmills@tularecounty.ca.gov and jwillis@tularecounty.ca.gov

Applicant(s): Tulare County Public Works
5961 South Mooney Blvd.
Visalia, CA 93277 (559) 624-7000

Project Title: Tulare County Roadside Hazardous Fuels Control Project

Project Location - Specific: Approximately 400 miles of County-maintained road rights-of-way in the foothill and mountain areas of eastern Tulare County, within the State Responsibility Area (SRA), generally within a 30-foot roadside treatment buffer. The program covers approximately 2,910 acres and serves transportation corridors providing ingress and egress to approximately 30 at-risk communities. Final treatment corridors will be identified on the County-approved road list and project tracking map.

Project Location- Section, Township, Range: Various; linear County roadway corridors throughout eastern Tulare County. Reference County-approved road list/project map.

Project Location - City: Various unincorporated foothill and mountain communities **Project Location - County:** Tulare

Description of Nature, Purpose, and Beneficiaries of Project: The County proposes a five-year roadside hazardous fuels reduction program. Work will occur along approximately 400 miles of existing County road rights-of-way in High and Very High Fire Hazard Severity areas and will be limited to a 30-foot roadside treatment buffer. Treatments include removal of small vegetation and ladder fuels; selective removal of hazardous woody vegetation, trees, and shrubs up to 18 inches in diameter within or overhanging the right-of-way; weed abatement by pulling, mowing, or lawful herbicide application; and chipping, with chipped material scattered to a depth of less than four inches or removed. Treatment is intended for gentle slopes of less than 20 percent. Work will be performed by County staff and contracted crews. The purpose is to reduce hazardous fuel loads, maintain safer evacuation and emergency-response corridors, protect public infrastructure, and improve ingress and egress for residents and first responders. No roadway widening, new travel lanes, or new roads are proposed. Beneficiaries of the Project are community members and roadway users in mountainous areas of Tulare 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));
- ☐ Common Sense Exemption: CEQA Guidelines 15061(b)(3);
- ☒ Categorical Exemption: **CEQA Guidelines Class 1 Section 15301(c) Existing Facilities; and Class 4 Section 15304 Minor Alterations to Land**
- ☐ Statutory Exemptions: