

NOTICE OF PREPARATION

To: Distribution List

From: Tony Andersen, Executive Director
California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

Subject: Notice of Preparation of a Subsequent Program Environmental Impact Report for the California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP) Update

INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) certified the Program Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the CalVTP (SCH# 2019012052). The 2019 CalVTP Program EIR covers specific treatment activities: prescribed burning (pile burning and broadcast burning), mechanical treatments, manual treatments, herbicide application, and prescribed herbivory. It also evaluates specific treatment types: wildland-urban interface (WUI) fuel reduction, fuel breaks (shaded and nonshaded), and ecological restoration. The geographic scope of the 2019 Program EIR encompassed a treatable landscape of 20.3 million acres within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) in California.

On March 1, 2025, Governor Newsom issued an emergency proclamation that, among other actions, directed the Board to take immediate steps to update the 2019 CalVTP Program EIR, in consultation with the California Natural Resources Agency and others, to increase the CalVTP's efficiency and usefulness in expanding and accelerating the rapid environmental review of large-scale vegetation treatment projects. In response to the Governor's emergency proclamation, the Board is preparing a Subsequent Program EIR (SPEIR) to update the 2019 CalVTP Program EIR to increase its efficiency and usefulness, which includes expanding the geographic scope of the CalVTP and instituting other program revisions. Proposed updates to the 2019 CalVTP Program EIR are described in more detail below under "Program Description."

The Board is the lead agency pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the CalVTP Update SPEIR. The Board is distributing this notice of preparation (NOP) to seek input from responsible and trustee agencies and other interested parties regarding the scope and content of the environmental information to be included in the CalVTP Update SPEIR. This NOP initiates a 40-day public comment period, from January 9, 2026 to February 18, 2026.

PROGRAM LOCATION

The geographic scope of the 2019 CalVTP Program EIR, or treatable landscape, was developed using data from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection's (CAL FIRE) Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) to identify areas in the SRA suitable for vegetation treatment. Certain vegetation types were excluded from the treatable landscape because the wildfire risks within these types were considered in 2019 to be negligible. Using this method, 20.3 million acres within the 31 million-acre SRA were identified as being appropriate for vegetation treatments as part of the 2019 CalVTP.

The CalVTP Update will expand the treatable landscape to portions of the state suitable for vegetation treatment regardless of fire suppression responsibility designation (e.g., expand into the Local Responsibility Area; federally owned and Tribal lands will still be excluded). The expanded treatable landscape will be developed based on more recent vegetation data and improved understanding of fire behavior to include more areas in California. The updated treatable landscape is anticipated to encompass more than 35.5 million acres, representing an increase of at least 15.2 million acres from the treatable landscape considered in the 2019 CalVTP Program EIR (see Figure 1).



Source: Data received from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection in 2025; adapted by Ascent in 2025.

Figure 1 Proposed Treatable Landscape for the CalVTP Update Subsequent Program EIR

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

According to the Board's experience with CalVTP implementation and feedback received from project proponents, implementing entities, regulatory and resource agencies, and others since the Program EIR was certified at the end of 2019, the following categories of updates have been preliminarily identified. This list is not comprehensive, and more updates to the program will be identified through planned outreach as directed by the emergency proclamation and as required under CEQA.

- ▶ Expand the treatable landscape into areas suitable for vegetation treatment regardless of fire suppression responsibility designation.
- ▶ Broaden allowable activities related to the disposition of biomass generated by vegetation treatment.
- ▶ Recognize the dual objectives of cultural and ecological restoration through vegetation management activities that integrate tribal ecological knowledge.
- ▶ Expand the list of herbicides that may be used.
- ▶ Streamline regulatory compliance and permitting.
- ▶ Clarify and revise CalVTP standard project requirements and mitigation measures to promote their efficient implementation while protecting environmental resources.
- ▶ Increase the efficiency of the Project-Specific Analysis preparation process for later activities under the CalVTP.

POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS

The CalVTP Update SPEIR will present an analysis of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed updates, including direct, indirect, and cumulative effects, and will identify mitigation measures to reduce potentially significant impacts to the extent feasible. All the environmental topic areas identified in Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines will be addressed. These topic areas will include:

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| ▶ aesthetics, | ▶ land use and planning, |
| ▶ agriculture and forestry resources, | ▶ mineral resources, |
| ▶ air quality, | ▶ noise, |
| ▶ biological resources, | ▶ population and housing, |
| ▶ cultural resources, | ▶ public services, |
| ▶ energy, | ▶ recreation, |
| ▶ geology and soils, | ▶ transportation, |
| ▶ greenhouse gas emissions, | ▶ tribal cultural resources, |
| ▶ hazards and hazardous materials, | ▶ utilities and service systems, and |
| ▶ hydrology and water quality, | ▶ wildfire. |

Potential environmental effects may be possible in any of these topic areas. The Board is not yet able to determine with specificity the individualized effects in these environmental topic areas or whether such effects will be less than significant, less than significant with mitigation, or significant and unavoidable.

CEQA SCOPING

Scoping meeting: Because the proposed CalVTP Update is a project of statewide, regional, and areawide significance, the Board will hold a scoping meeting, in accordance with California Public Resources Code (PRC) Section 21083.9(b)(2) and State CEQA Guidelines Section 15206. Invitees include the following entities: responsible agencies; public agencies with jurisdiction by law with respect to the project; affected cities and counties; and any public agency, organization or individual who has filed a written request for the notice.

The Board will host a virtual public scoping meeting on February 10, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom (web link and QR code to register are provided below). The meeting will inform interested parties about the project and provide agencies and interested parties with an opportunity to provide oral comments on the scope and content of the CalVTP Update SPEIR.

Register for the scoping meeting using either the link or QR code:

Link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gvK_F-KPTc-kptt8DDSFLw



SCAN ME

Special agency scoping meetings: Consistent with PRC Section 21080.4(b), responsible and trustee agencies have the right to request a meeting to determine the scope and content of the environmental information required. Please contact the Board at the email address below to request such a meeting. Responsible and trustee agencies are also invited to attend the public scoping meeting required by PRC Section 21083.9.

SUBMITTAL OF SCOPING COMMENTS

All comments on this NOP must be submitted no later than 40 days from the date of this notice. To be considered in the development of the CalVTP Update SPEIR, comments must be received by February 18, 2026 at 5:00pm. Comments may be submitted by mail or email. Please include the name of a designated contact person for your agency or organization. The Board will not accept comments submitted over the webinar chat during the scoping meeting. Written comments will only be accepted when submitted by mail or email.

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