NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

State of California
The Natural Resources Agency
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)

PROJECT TITLE	Deer Trail Fuels Reduction Project		
PROJECT LOCATION	Portions of Sections 28, 29, and 33, T31S, R31E, MDBM	**COUNTY**	Kern
LEAD AGENCY	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
CONTACT	Corey Regan		
ADDRESS	Kern County Fire Department 5642 Victor Street Bakersfield, CA 93308	**PHONE**	661-330-0182

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

Bear Valley Springs is a community of over 4,000 households located about 20 miles west of Tehachapi in a valley adjacent to Bear Mountain. Over 1300 acres of the 25,000 acre community are located within a coniferous forest. Due to the extreme drought conditions and the ensuing western pine bark beetle infestation in this area, up to 85% of the conifers are dead or dying.

The long duration of sun exposure coupled with the strong afternoon Tehachapi winds presents a most challenging fire suppression environment. Bear Valley Springs has been identified in the Greater Tehachapi Community Wildfire Protection Plan as one of the communities most at risk. Specifically, the CWPP states the homes located off Deer Trail Drive are at the highest risk within the study area. Deer Trail Drive is the only ingress-egress route for this portion of the community.

Dead and dying trees were removed from a number of parcels along Deer Trail in the Fall of 2015 by an LTO under drought mortality exemptions. The utility company is currently removing more trees that threaten power lines.

There are two projects currently planned for this Spring along Deer Trail Drive. First, a Licensed Timber Operator will harvest and remove dead, dying, and hazardous conifers requiring professional felling and heavy equipment. This work will be done under 1038 (k) Drought Mortality Exemptions.

Following the timber harvest, hand crews from the Kern County Fire Department will treat the logging slash, brush, and smaller dead and dying hazard trees. This is the 214 acre Deer Trail Fuels Reduction Project. The majority of the slash will be chipped and the chips blown back onto the property. If portions of the project area are not accessible to the chipper or otherwise impractical to chip, piling and burning shall be done instead. Some of the larger pieces may be left on site or removed for firewood.

EXEMPTION STATUS

- [x] Categorical Exemption Type/Section: Class 4 15304. Minor Alterations to Land
- [ ] Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- [ ] Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- [ ] Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- [ ] Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT

This project fits under the description for a Class 4 Categorical Exemption pertaining to minor alterations to land as identified in the CEQA Guidelines. After completing an environmental analysis, the Department has determined this project will have no significant impact on the environment. This determination is based on field assessments, a CNDDB and RareFind, and BIOS search, greenhouse gas emission calculations, and an archaeological review completed by CAL FIRE Resource Management staff.

Field review by RPF Gletne confirmed that no exceptions apply which would preclude the use of a Notice of Exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland/timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at CAL FIRE Headquarters in Fresno.

DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

MAR 22 2016

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

Helge Eng, Deputy Director — 3/21/16 Date
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection