

MARIPOSA COUNTY NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

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TO: Office of Planning and Research FROM: Mariposa County Resource Conservation District
P.O. Box 3044, Room 12 PO Box 746 (5039 Fairgrounds Road)
Sacramento, CA 95812-3044 Mariposa, CA 95338

TO: County Clerk, County of Mariposa
P.O. Box 247
Mariposa, CA 95338

Project Title: Mariposa County Hazard Tree and Biomass Removal (SSARR Fuel Reduction and Biomass Utilization)

Project Location – County/Specific: Project is located throughout Mariposa County in areas along maintained Road Right-of-Ways, on County maintained properties (parks, etc.) and in close proximity to public infrastructure that are threatened by felled, dead trees and standing dead and dying trees. Specifically, the tree removal work is typically conducted within a 200 foot distance of County maintained roads and in close proximity to at-risk County facilities and infrastructure threatened by dead or dying trees.

Description of Nature, Purpose and Beneficiaries of Project: The Mariposa County SSARR Fuel Reduction and Biomass Utilization project is a Tree Mortality Hazard Mitigation Project in Tier 1 and Tier 2 High Hazard zones on SRA lands within the County. The work is critical to meet the public safety and tree disposal needs stemming from widespread tree mortality in the southern Sierra Nevada, to complete the program of work (2016 Mariposa County Tree Mortality Hazard Mitigation Project) with the co-benefits that include protecting infrastructure and increasing public safety from debris flows and flooding damage due to high levels of biomass on erosive, fire damaged soils. It also protects communities located within the Wildland Urban Interface.

The mitigation activities are needed based on a high density of dead or dying trees which threaten powerlines, roads and other evacuation corridors, critical community infrastructure and other existing structures. The project will benefit Mariposa County residents and visitors, Mariposa County business owners, the US Forest Service, CALFIRE and all emergency responders. The dead or dying trees included in this project are not healthy, mature or scenic trees based on their current condition. No ground disturbing activities will occur as a result of the project. No work will be done within the bed, bank or channel of any existing drainage within the project areas. If burning is needed, it will be completed in compliance with Mariposa County Air Pollution Control District permits. Mariposa Resource Conservation District and Mariposa County have staff and/or contractors who are appropriately trained and qualified to identify dying trees. Dead or dying trees will be felled in a controlled manner to reduce hazards.

Name of Public Agency Approving Project: Mariposa County Resource Conservation District

Name of Person (Applicant) or Agency Carrying Out Project: David Mecchi, Mariposa County Resource Conservation District Board President.

Exempt Status:

- Declared Emergency (PRC §21080(b)(3); §15269(a) CEQA Guidelines): Proclamation of a State of Emergency, Executive Order 10-30-2015
- Emergency Project (PRC §21080(b)(4); §15269(b)(c) CEQA Guidelines)
- Categorical Exemption (Type and Section No.): Existing Facilities, §15301(c) and §15301(h) CEQA Guidelines
- Statutory Exemption (State Code No.): PRC Section §21080(b)(4); §15269(c) CEQA Guidelines

Reason Why Project Is Exempt:

The Mariposa County Hazard Tree and Biomass Removal (SSARR Fuel Reduction and Biomass Utilization) are a part of the Mariposa County Tree Mortality Hazard Mitigation efforts which are short term tasks necessary to mitigate an emergency. As such, they are exempt pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Statutory Exemptions, Section 15269 EMERGENCY PROJECTS, subsection (c): The felling of dead or dying hazard trees along county-maintained roads and within county owned and maintained public parks and near county facilities, is a specific action necessary to prevent or mitigate an emergency to public health and emergency access. The abundance of dead or dying hazard trees in these locations is a result of a severe drought in the area and bark beetle-infestation and are not a long term project.

Mariposa County Tree Mortality Hazard Mitigation Projects are categorically exempt from CEQA pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, Categorical Exemptions, Section 15301 EXISTING FACILITIES, including subsections (c) and (h): The felling of dead or dying hazard trees along county-maintained roads and within county owned and maintained public parks, and near County infrastructure is an activity necessary for maintenance of existing public facilities. The removal could also be categorized as maintenance of existing native growth in these areas, which have succumbed to prolonged drought conditions and beetle infestation. There will be no expansion of use resulting from the activity.

**Lead Agency Contact Person: Melinda Barrett, Resource Conservation District (RCD) Program Manager
Phone Number: (209) 966-3431 ext. 103**

<u>David Mecchi</u>	<u>07/18/19</u>	<u>MCRCD Board President</u>
Signature	Date	Title

- Signed by Lead Agency
- Signed by Applicant

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Date Received for filing at OPR: **JULY 18 2019**
STATE CLEARINGHOUSE