

# **ATTACHMENT C**

Notice of Exemption

# CEQA – Notice of Exemption

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Santa Barbara County Fire Department

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Tepusquet VMP Project Herbivory Treatment	COUNTY	SANTA BARBARA
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Tepusquet Canyon / Blazing Saddle Drive / Powerline Road	CLERK OF THE	BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	Santa Barbara County Fire Department (SBC)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Fred Tan	<b>PHONE</b>	805-681-5500
<b>ADDRESS</b>	4410 Cathedral Oaks Road Santa Barbara, CA 93101		

**Project Description -**

This Report will address the 399 acres of prescribed herbivory treatments within the Tepusquet VMP, a Fuels Reduction project in the Tepusquet community consisting of: roadside treatments, creating community defensible space zones (CDSP), a community chipping program, strategic fuel breaks, prescribed fire, and prescribed herbivory. The Herbivory Treatment will utilize sheep to graze annual grasses on existing Ag zoned property that has a long history of commercial grazing. Vegetation will be selectively grazed to reduce fuel loading by 70%. Livestock will be purged prior to treatment to eliminate the potential for invasive species introduction. Treatment sites will be monitored by a certified biologist as needed to avoid potential impacts during nesting season.

The prescribed herbivory treatment area is characterized by moderate slopes with multiple aspects covered in vegetation typical of oak woodland. The area contains numerous homes and is best described as an intermix WUI. will assist to reduce ignitions, fire size and greenhouse gas emissions, while protecting intermix communities, the local watershed and the agricultural industry of the Santa Maria Valley.

The majority of the project is in the SRA in the Very High and High Fire Hazard Severity Zones. 463 structures will benefit from the proposed grant project, including 144 homes located throughout Tepusquet, Colson and Ruiz canyons.

**EXEMPTION STATUS**

- Categorical Exemption Type/Section: 15304 Minor Alterations to Land  
15308 Actions Taken for Protection of Environment
- 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**

The purpose of this project is to reduce wildfire risk by reducing vegetation fuels using prescribed grazing. The work proposed is a minor alteration to vegetation which does not involve the removal of healthy, mature, scenic trees and is consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, exemption 15304, Minor Alterations to Land. The project will also help protect the surrounding wildland area from wildfire spread from the surrounding Urban Interface which is consistent with State CEQA Guidelines Article 19, exemption 15308 - Actions Taken for Protection of Environment. SBC staff 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 166 West Hwy 246, Buellton, CA 93427.

**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

  
 Rob Hazard, Fire Marshal  
 Santa Barbara County Fire Department

5/16/2022  
 Date