

## NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

**TO:** Santa Barbara County Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Whitney Wilkinson, Planner  
Planning and Development Department

The project or activity identified below is determined to be exempt from further environmental review requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as defined in the State and County Guidelines for the implementation of CEQA.

**APN:** N/A                      **Case No.:** 22GPA-00000-00005

**Location:** Countywide

**Project Title:** Seismic Safety and Safety Element Amendment - Wildfire Policy Updates

**Project Applicant:** County of Santa Barbara

**Project Description:**

The Safety Element is required to be reviewed and updated to address the risk of fire for land classified as State Responsibility Areas (SRAs) and land classified as Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones (VHFHSZ) (Gov. Code, § 65302(g)(3)). This includes Fire hazard severity zone maps available from the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, historical data on wildfires, information about wildfire hazard from the United States Geological Survey, the general location and distribution of existing and planned uses of land in VHFHSZs and SRAs, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities, and the local, state, and federal agencies with responsibility for fire protection (Gov. Code, § 65302(g)(3)(A)).

Based on that information, the Safety Element must include goals, policies, and objectives that protect the community from the unreasonable risk of wildfire (Gov. Code, § 65302(g)(3)(B)). The Safety Element also includes policies and actions that avoid or minimize wildfire hazards associated with new uses of land, locate new essential public facilities outside of high fire risk areas, require design of adequate infrastructure with safe access for emergency response vehicles, visible street signs, and water supplies for structural fire suppression, and ensure the County works cooperatively with other public agencies with responsibility for fire protection (Gov. Code, § 65302(g)(3)(C)).

**Name of Public Agency Approving Project:** County of Santa Barbara

**Name of Person or Entity Carrying Out Project:** Planning and Development Department  
Long Range Planning Division

**Exempt Status:**


- Ministerial
- Statutory Exemption
- Categorical Exemption
- Emergency Project
- Declared Emergency
- No Possibility of Significant Effect, CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3)

**Cite specific CEQA and/or CEQA Guidelines Section:** Section 15061(b)(3) (Review for Exemption) – “Where it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment, the activity is not subject to CEQA.”

**Reasons to support exemption findings:** The Safety Element update includes: 1) updates to the Safety Element’s wildfire information text and maps; 2) links to a Safety Element interactive map with additional fire related resource layers and county fire maps; 3) incorporation by reference of the adopted Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan (MJHMP); and 4) wildfire policy updates which reflect standards and regulations with which the County must already comply from the State. The regulations come from the State and County Fire Code, State and County Building Code, State Fire Safe Regulations (14 CCR 1270-1276), and other State regulations. Other policies reflect standards with which the County complies with as standard practice during entitlement review. Any projects to address identified deficiencies or that otherwise occur as a result of this update will be subject to compliance with CEQA, if applicable. Therefore, it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this project may have a significant effect on the environment, and it is not subject to CEQA according to CEQA Guidelines Section 15061(b)(3).

**Lead Agency Contact Person:** Whitney Wilkinson

**Phone #:** 805-568-2067

**Department/Division Representative:** \_\_\_\_\_  \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** 6/27/2023 \_\_\_\_\_

**Acceptance Date:** 7/11/2023 \_\_\_\_\_

**Distribution:** Hearing Support Staff

**Date Filed by County Clerk:** \_\_\_\_\_