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DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION
P.O. Box 944246
SACRAMENTO, CA 94244-2460
(916) 653-7772
Website: www.fire.ca.gov

July 1st, 2026

Steve Monowitz
Director of Planning and Building
County of San Mateo
455 County Center, Second Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

Re: Extension of Tree Permit Exemption Request Due to Current Fire Hazard Conditions

Dear Mr. Monowitz,

As an Officer of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, I am requesting that the County of San Mateo continue to take specific exemptive action related to tree removal permits for certain non-native species. Exempting these trees from the tree removal permitting process will help to increase defensible space and minimize the hazard they pose to life and personal property.

Specifically, I am requesting that you utilize your emergency powers, under Section 12.020.1 and 12.027 of the San Mateo County Significant Tree Ordinance, to exempt permitting requirements for eucalyptus (all species), pines (all species), acacia, tan oak and bay trees within 100' of any habitable structure, (including structures on adjacent properties) or within 30' of a driveway/access road, from July 1, 2026, until July 1, 2027.

This action is an important step to empowering property owners to take the actions necessary to create defensible space. Your action on this request will help to improve community safety as we enter another busy peak fire season. I look forward to discussing this further and appreciate your assistance on this very important issue.

Sincerely,

Signed by:
Ryan West
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Ryan West
Deputy Chief
CAL FIRE San Mateo – Santa Cruz Unit