

**DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION**

SAN MATEO – SANTA CRUZ UNIT
6059 HIGHWAY 9, FELTON, CA 95018
(831) 335-5353
Website: www.fire.ca.gov



June 10, 2021

Steve Monowitz
Community Development Director
County of San Mateo
455 County Center, Second Floor
Redwood City, CA 94063

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

Dear Mr. Monowitz,

As we saw last year during the CZU Lightning Complex, local wildfire conditions are becoming increasingly dangerous. In one 24-hour period last August we saw more acres of San Mateo County consumed by wildfire than in the previous 100 years combined. Since then, we have received below average rainfall that has resulted in exceptional drought conditions, widespread tree mortality, and below average fuel and soil moistures. Considering this, I, as an Officer of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, am requesting that the County of San Mateo take immediate 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, 2021 until July 1, 2022.

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 have an immediate meaningful impact on the safety of the community as we enter what looks to be another busy peak fire season. I look forward to discussing this further and appreciate your assistance on this very important issue.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Ian Larkin'.

Ian Larkin
Unit Chief
CAL FIRE San Mateo – Santa Cruz Unit