

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection

NOTICE OF PROPOSED ACTION

“Post-Fire Recovery Exemption, 2019”

**Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations (14 CCR),
Division 1.5, Chapter 4
Subchapters 7, Article 2
Amend: §§ 1038, 1038.1, and 1038.2
Repeal: § 1038.6**

[Notice Published July 5, 2019]

NATURE OF PROCEEDING

Notice is hereby given that the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board) is proposing to take the action described in the Informative Digest.

PUBLIC HEARING

The Board will hold a public hearing on August 21, 2019, at its regularly scheduled meeting commencing at 9:00 a.m., at the Natural Resources Building Auditorium, 1416 9th Street, Sacramento, CA. At the hearing, any person may present statements or arguments, orally or in writing, relevant to the proposed action. The Board requests, but does not require, that persons who make oral comments at the hearing also submit a written summary of their statements. Additionally, pursuant to **Government Code (GOV) § 11125.1(b)**, writings that are public records pursuant to **GOV § 11125.1(a)** and that are distributed to members of the state body prior to or during a meeting, pertaining to any item to be considered during the meeting, shall be made available for public inspection at the meeting if prepared by the state body or a member of the state body, or after the meeting if prepared by some other person.

WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD

Any person, or authorized representative, may submit written comments relevant to the proposed regulatory action to the Board. The written comment period ends on August 21, 2019 at the conclusion of the public hearing.

The Board will consider comments received at the Board office by that time and those comments received at the public hearing, including written comments submitted in connection with oral testimony at the public hearing. The Board requests, but does not require, that persons who submit written comments to the Board reference the title of the rulemaking proposal in their comments to facilitate review.

Written comments shall be submitted to the following address:

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: Eric Hedge

Regulations Program Manager
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Written comments can also be hand delivered to the contact person listed in this notice at the following address:

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Room 1506-14
1416 9th Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Written comments may also be sent to the Board via facsimile at the following phone number:

(916) 653-0989

Written comments may also be delivered via e-mail at the following address:

PublicComments@BOF.ca.gov

AUTHORITY AND REFERENCE (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a)(2) and 1 CCR § 14) 14 CCR § 1122)

Authority cited: Sections 4551, 4553, 4584 and 4584.1, Public Resources Code.
Reference: Sections 4290, 4291, 4516, 4527, 4584, 4584.1 and 4597, Public Resources Code

INFORMATIVE DIGEST/POLICY STATEMENT OVERVIEW (pursuant to GOV 11346.5(a)(3)(A)-(D))

Pursuant to the Z'berg-Nejedly Forest Practice Act of 1973 (FPA), Public Resources Code § 4511, et seq. the Board is authorized to construct a system of forest practice regulations applicable to timber management on state and private timberlands.

Pursuant to PRC §4584 the Board is authorized to exempt a person engaged in specific forest management activities, upon determining that the exemption is consistent with the purposes FPA, from the FPA, or portions of the FPA.

PRC § 4584 authorizes the Board to adopt regulation to provide an exemption, from all or portions of the FPA, to a person engaging in certain forest management activities specified by the statute, including, the cutting or removal of dead, dying, or diseased trees of any size.

Additionally, pursuant to PRC § 4551.5, the rules and regulations that the Board is authorized to adopt include measures for fire prevention and control and for prevention and control of damage by forest insects, pests, and diseases.

The history of the development of this regulation is as follows:

- The Board adopted and authorized for submission to the Office of Administrative Law (OAL) the regulatory action entitled “Emergency Rulemaking to Facilitate Post-Fire Recovery Efforts within the County of Butte” as emergency regulations in accordance with Government Code (GOV) §§ 11346.1, 11346.5 (2)-(6) and 11349.6 at their regularly scheduled meeting on January 23, 2019.
- This regulatory action (OAL File No. 2019-0206-01E) became effective February 19, 2019 and is set to expire on August 20, 2019.
- To avoid a lapse in the effective period, at their regularly scheduled meeting on June 12, 2019, the Board authorized re-adoption of the findings of emergency, with minor revisions to the rule text.

Wildfires in California

Modern California wildfire activity represents a significant public risk and hazard. In 2018, over 8,500 fires burned nearly 2 million acres throughout the state, resulting in over \$3.5 billion in damages, the destruction of over 18,000 structures, and the deaths of at least 98 people. These severe wildfires also create significant and widespread issues with tree mortality, resulting in a large number of dead and dying trees across the landscape, including those areas surrounding homes and other structures. The **problem** that the proposed action seeks to address is that the large number of trees which are damaged and weakened as a result of these fires can hamper rebuilding and recovery efforts. Additionally, trees which are dead or dying as a result of wildfires represent a potential hazard to life or property as they deteriorate and ultimately collapse.

Additionally, there currently exists an issue of consistency within the FPRs in which the term “Approved and Legally Permitted Structures” is used throughout the regulations in its defined capacity, but the regulatory definition is limited to one specific provision.

The **purpose** of the proposed action is to: 1) provide a person engaging in the cutting or removal of dead or dying trees an exemption, from the plan preparation and submission requirements (PRC § 4581) and from the completion report and stocking report requirements (PRC §§ 4585 and 4587) of the Forest Practice Act, when specific requirements are met; and 2) to clarify that the term “Approved and Legally Permitted Structures” is not exclusive in application to 14 CCR § 1038(c).

The **effect** of the proposed action is to provide an exemption from portions of FPA to allow the harvesting of dead or dying trees around Approved and Legally Permitted Structures, or those that have been damaged or destroyed by wildfire, in order to facilitate the removal of hazardous materials from and assist in the reconstruction and revitalization of areas directly affected by wildfires when those activities are consistent with, and within the geographic scope of, an existing valid and effective gubernatorial executive order or proclamation of a state of emergency. If a fire has caused dead or dying trees surrounding an Approved and Legally Permitted Structure where no such

gubernatorial action has been taken, a timberland owner may also be eligible for the exemption with the certification of a Registered Professional Forester that those trees are dead or dying as a result of wildfire which had occurred no more than three years prior to the submission of the notice of exemption. The proposed action will provide exemption from the plan preparation and submission requirements (PRC § 4581) and from the completion report and stocking report requirements (PRC §§ 4585 and 4587) of the FPA when specific requirements are met.

The primary **benefit** of the proposed action is the reduction in risk to life, property, and the environment posed by dead and dying trees by streamlining their harvest and removal and enabling landowners to successfully recover from destructive wildfire events.

There is no comparable Federal regulation or statute.

Board staff conducted an evaluation on whether or not the proposed action is inconsistent or incompatible with existing State regulations pursuant to **GOV § 11346.5(a)(3)(D)**. State regulations related to the proposed action were, in fact, relied upon in the development of the proposed action to ensure the consistency and compatibility of the proposed action with existing State regulations. Otherwise, Board staff evaluated the balance of existing State regulations related to secondary egress routes and found no existing State regulations that met the same purpose as the proposed action. Based on this evaluation and effort, the Board has determined that the proposed regulations are neither inconsistent nor incompatible with existing State regulations. The proposed regulation is entirely consistent and compatible with existing Board rules.

Statute to which the proposed action was compared: §§ 4584, 4584.1, and 4584.2, Public Resources Code.

MANDATED BY FEDERAL LAW OR REGULATIONS

The proposed action is not mandated by Federal law or regulations.

The proposed action neither conflicts with, nor duplicates, Federal regulations.

There are no comparable Federal regulations related to management plans for the non-industrial harvesting of timber. No existing Federal regulations meeting the same purpose as the proposed action were identified.

OTHER STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a)(4))

There are no other matters as are prescribed by statute applicable to the specific State agency or to any specific regulation or class of regulations.

LOCAL MANDATE (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a)(5)).

The proposed action does not impose a mandate on local agencies or school districts.

FISCAL IMPACT (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a)(6))

There is no cost to any local agency or school district that is required to be reimbursed under Part 7 (commencing with Section 17500) of Division 4 of the Government Code.

A local agency or school district has the authority to levy service charges, fees, or assessments sufficient to pay for the program or level of service mandated by the act, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code.

The proposed action will not result in the imposition of other non-discretionary costs or savings to local agencies.

The proposed action will not result in costs or savings in Federal funding to the State.

The proposed action will not result in costs to any State agency. The proposed action represents a continuation of existing forest practice regulations related to exemptions from the Forest Practice Act and allows for an additional exemption type for utilization by the regulated public, but does not create additional burden on any state agency.

The proposed action will not result in the imposition of other non-discretionary costs or savings to local agencies.

HOUSING COSTS (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a)(12))

The proposed action will not significantly affect housing costs.

SIGNIFICANT STATEWIDE ADVERSE ECONOMIC IMPACT DIRECTLY AFFECTING BUSINESS, INCLUDING ABILITY TO COMPETE (pursuant to GOV §§ 11346.3(a), 11346.5(a)(7) and 11346.5(a)(8))

The proposed action will not have a significant statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states (by making it costlier to produce goods or services in California).

FACTS, EVIDENCE, DOCUMENTS, TESTIMONY, OR OTHER EVIDENCE RELIED UPON TO SUPPORT INITIAL DETERMINATION IN THE NOTICE THAT THE PROPOSED ACTION WILL NOT HAVE A SIGNIFICANT ADVERSE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON BUSINESS (pursuant to GOV § 11346.2(b)(5) and GOV § 11346.5(a)(8))

Contemplation by the Board of the economic impact of the provisions of the proposed action through the lens of the decades of contemplating fire safety in land use and development in California that the Board brings to bear on regulatory development.

STATEMENTS OF THE RESULTS OF THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

The results of the economic impact assessment are provided below pursuant to **GOV § 11346.5(a)(10)** and prepared pursuant to **GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(A)-(D)**. The proposed action:

- Will not create jobs within California (GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(A));

- Will not eliminate jobs within California (GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(A));
- Will not create new businesses (GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(B));
- Will not eliminate existing businesses within California (GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(B));
- Will not affect the expansion or contraction of businesses currently doing business within California (GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(C));
- Will yield nonmonetary benefits (GOV § 11346.3(b)(1)(D)). For additional information on the benefits of the proposed regulation, please see anticipated benefits found under the Informative Digest/Policy Statement Overview.

COST IMPACTS ON REPRESENTATIVE PERSON OR BUSINESS (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a)(9))

The agency is not aware of any cost impacts that a representative private person or business would necessarily incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action. No adverse impacts are to be expected.

BUSINESS REPORT (pursuant to GOV §§ 11346.5(a)(11) and 11346.3(d))

The proposed action does not impose a business reporting requirement.

SMALL BUSINESS (defined in GOV 11342.610)

Small businesses, within the meaning of GOV § 11342.610, are not expected to be affected by the proposed action.

Small business, pursuant to 1 CCR § 4(a):

- (1) Is legally required to comply with the regulation;
- (2) Is not legally required to enforce the regulation;
- (3) Does not derive a benefit from the enforcement of the regulation;
- (4) May incur a detriment from the enforcement of the regulation if they do not comply with the regulation.

Pursuant to 1 CCR § (b), the reason(s) the regulation affects small business are the same as provided in the Economic Impact Analysis in the Initial Statement of Reasons.

ALTERNATIVES INFORMATION

In accordance with **GOV § 11346.5(a)(13)**, the Board must determine that no reasonable alternative it considers, or that has otherwise been identified and brought to the attention of the Board, would be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed, or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons than the proposed action, or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law.

CONTACT PERSON

Requests for copies of the proposed text of the regulations, the Initial Statement of Reasons, modified text of the regulations and any questions regarding the substance of the proposed action may be directed to:

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: Eric Hedge
Regulations Program Manager
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460
Telephone: (916) 653-8007

The designated backup person in the event Mr. Hedge is not available is Matt Dias, Executive Officer for the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. Mr. Dias may be contacted at the above address or phone.

AVAILABILITY STATEMENTS (pursuant to GOV § 11346.5(a) (16), (18))

All of the following are available from the contact person:

1. Express terms of the proposed action using UNDERLINE to indicate an addition to the California Code of Regulations and ~~STRIKETHROUGH~~ to indicate a deletion.
2. Initial Statement of Reasons, which includes a statement of the specific purpose of each adoption, amendment, or repeal, the problem the Board is addressing, and the rationale for the determination by the Board that each adoption, amendment, or repeal is reasonably necessary to carry out the purpose and address the problem for which it is proposed.
3. The information upon which the proposed action is based (pursuant to **GOV § 11346.5(b)**).
4. Changed or modified text. After holding the hearing and considering all timely and relevant comments received, the Board may adopt the proposed regulations substantially as described in this notice. If the Board makes modifications which are sufficiently related to the originally proposed text, it will make the modified text—with the changes clearly indicated—available to the public for at least 15 days before the Board adopts the regulations as revised. Notice of the comment period on changed regulations, and the full text as modified, will be sent to any person who testified at the hearings, submitted comments during the public comment period, including written and oral comments received at the public hearing, or requested notification of the availability of such changes from the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Board will accept written comments on the modified regulations for 15 days after the date on which they are made available.

FINAL STATEMENT OF REASONS

When the Final Statement of Reasons (FSOR) has been prepared, the FSOR will be available from the contact person on request.

INTERNET ACCESS

All of the material referenced in the Availability Statements is also available on the Board web site at:

<https://bof.fire.ca.gov/regulations/proposed-rule-packages/>