



August 3rd, 2021
Dina El-Tawansy, Caltrans District 4 Director
111 Grand Avenue
Oakland, CA, 94612

RE: San Mateo County Caltrans Maintained Evacuation Routes

Dear Director El-Tawansy,

As California enters another severe fire season with significant drought conditions, *San Mateo County Fire Department / CAL FIRE*, the *San Mateo County Board of Supervisors*, *Fire Safe SMC*, and *North County Fire* are identifying their priorities on wildfire resiliency, hazardous fuels reduction, and safe evacuation routes. Maintaining safe evacuation routes is a primary concern for community safety and operational ingress for fire apparatus during a wildfire incident.

We thank Caltrans for their engagement and interest in fuel reduction projects and would like to express our support of Caltrans removing hazardous fuels, primarily eucalyptus, from highways within our high-risk wildfire areas. The areas we have identified as high concern are stated below:

Highway 92 approaching Half Moon Bay
Highway 1 at the Southern end of Pacifica

The eucalyptus that line these roadways have frequent limb failures, overhang PGE lines, continuously shed bark adding to the hazardous ground fuels, and many are at the end stage of their life span. Any one of these large trees, if they should fall or have a large limb failure, could block the roadway and require significant specialized work to remove the fallen trunks and reopen the roadway. During a wildfire these trees are vulnerable to ignition and the propagation of embers. If these trees were to be ignited during a wildfire incident the radiant heat might prohibit vehicles from passing through many of these roadways where the eucalyptus are less than a few feet from the paved roadway.

To assist Caltrans with these large hazardous fuels removal projects we are committed to assisting with community outreach and notification, facilitating potential adjacent land owner access points and applying for suitable grants to assist Caltrans with funding.

Sincerely,



Don Horsley, *SMC Board of Supervisors District 3*

David Canepa, *SMC Board of Supervisors District 5*

Mateo County Fire Department / CAL FIRE

Fire Safe SMC

North County Fire

Date _____