NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

Marin County
Environmental Coordination and Review

[October 25, 2022]

1. **Project Name:** Voluntary invasive weed management and eradication cost share program targeting primarily CDFA CCR Section 4500 and Cal-IPC invasive and noxious weeds on Marin County lands zoned for agricultural production on working and non-working lands, and associated roadides. Initially a pilot program will be implemented and if successful, will be broadened to include other agriculturally zoned lands.

2. **Project Location:** Marin County parcels zoned for agricultural production that are actively ranching and/or farming and lands that could engage in agricultural production, as well as associated roadides. To view a map of agriculturally zoned lands, visit the MarinMap online tool (https://www.marinmap.org/Html5Viewer/Index.html?viewer=smmdataviewer). To see the zoning layers, click and expand “Policy by City/Town” on the left-hand side, then expand “County Unincorporated” and click “Zoning”. Note that the data is scale sensitive, so you will need to zoom in to see parcel boundaries. Attached is a general zoning map of the county with an attached legend to help provide guidance in downloading a current map.

3. **Project Description:** Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) strategies such as grazing, mowing, hand pulling, weed whacking, and chemical treatments are commonly done as part of normal maintenance of private rangelands and pasturelands by ranchers, farmers, and other land managers. The objective of this voluntary invasive weed cost share program is to support the agricultural industry by conducting surveys for specific invasive and noxious weeds such as woolly distaff thistle, purple starthistle, gorse, and French broom (in conjunction with public land management efforts where possible) and to help them successfully manage and eradicate those populations. Existing laws require ranchers and farmers to protect endangered species and environmentally sensitive areas on their land.

The Marin County Department of Agriculture will recommend SPM strategies be used by land managers on all sites. If mechanical, cultural, and other reduced risk SPM strategies are unsuccessful or impractical, chemical treatments will be undertaken by a licensed Pest Control Business and/or private land manager who will use a composition of approved Milestone and/or Transline herbicide, a surfactant, and other materials as needed to reduce the movement of herbicides from the site. These materials are approved by the US
Environmental Protection Agency and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation (CDPR) for use on these types of invasive weeds. Milestone and Transline have the lowest signal word of "Caution" on the pesticide label, which means it’s in the lowest toxicity category compared to “Warning” and “Danger” materials. The CDPR licenses Pest Control Businesses and Pest Control Advisors, while the Marin County Department of Agriculture registers and/or issues Operator Identification Numbers to the businesses and/or land managers to perform work in the county. The specific material and amounts used must be reported to the Marin County Department of Agriculture within seven days by a licensed Pest Control Business or monthly by a land manager.

The Marin County Department of Agriculture is responsible for local oversight and enforcement of weed management and eradication. Through this pilot program, and potential expansion of the program, we will be able to better assist landowners in meeting state and local regulations pertaining to invasive and noxious weeds.

4. **Public Agency Approving Project:** Marin County Agricultural Commissioner

5. **Project Sponsor:** Marin County Agricultural Commissioner

6. **CEQA Exemption Status:** Categorical Exemption, Section 15307 “Actions by Regulatory Agencies for Protection of Natural Resources”

7. **Reasons for Exemption:**

Class 7 actions under Section 15307 consist of actions taken by regulatory agencies as authorized by state law or local ordinance to assure the maintenance, restoration, or enhancement of a natural resource where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment. The Marin County Agricultural Commissioner has the legal authority to control invasive and noxious weeds such woolly distaff thistle, purple starthistle, gorse, and French broom. These weeds are listed as Noxious weeds under California Code of Regulations **Section 4500** and are considered noxious and invasive by California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC). On private land, Sustainable Pest Management (SPM) treatments such as grazing, mowing, hand pulling, weed whacking, and herbicide treatments are commonly done as part of normal maintenance of rangelands and pasturelands by ranchers and farmers. This program will use site-specific SPM techniques to manage and/or eliminate invasive weed stands.

These targeted invasive and noxious weeds have become an extremely serious and challenging issue in many agricultural areas of Marin County. They have rendered thousands of acres of pastureland, rangeland, and natural areas unusable, including increasing the risk of wildfires, successfully displacing and outcompeting desirable species, and threatening other environmentally sensitive areas. Recapturing and maintaining productive rangelands, grasslands, and natural habitats is vital to the future of Marin County agriculture and to helping maintain a healthy, vibrant, and dynamic ecosystem and foodshed. This voluntary cost share program will improve drought resiliency by increasing forage capacity and feed for livestock and wildlife, including decreasing wildfire risk, increasing biodiversity, increasing carbon sequestration, and reducing seed spread into parks and open space lands and other adjacent lands.
The project will not result in any potentially significant environmental impacts. In addition, there are no relevant statutory exceptions or guideline exceptions based upon location, cumulative impact, or significant effect due to unusual circumstances to the above categorical exemption.

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Marin County Weed Cost Share Initiative
Pilot Project Area

Regions of Chileno Valley
- Laguna Lake
- San Antonio
- Lower Chileno Valley