



July 7, 2021

California Coastal Commission
455 Market St., Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

Via email to: NorthCentralCoast@coastal.ca.gov

Cc: CentralCoast@coastal.ca.gov

Re: Opposed to San Mateo County Public Works Plans, July 2021 – Thursday Agenda Items Th16a

Dear Commissioners and Staff,

The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club represents approximately 20,000 members and supporters in San Mateo, Santa Clara, and San Benito Counties.

We urge you to deny certifying, or at least delay certifying the San Mateo County (Th16a) Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Work Plan (PWP). The Th16a PWP would likely lead to significant environmental harm to native habitat along San Mateo County's coast.

San Mateo County's coast is comprised of grasses, farmland, coastal scrub, mixed Douglas fir and redwood conifer forests and a half-dozen, mostly small towns. Fuel reduction, with its reliance on herbicides, masticators, bulldozers, and chainsaws, will damage our beautiful wildlands and destroy biodiversity without reducing fire risk.

California's coastal forests historically burn large, high-intensity infrequent wildfires. The 2020 CZU Lightning Complex Fire was such a natural event, one of the infrequent severe fires that comes to San Mateo County coast. In the same region, the 178,000-acre Marble Cone Fire burned in 1977 and an unnamed 150,000-acre fire burned the same area in 1906. No amount of native vegetation management would have altered the course of the CZU Lightning-Complex fire.

Dense, impenetrable stands of chaparral and sage brush is the natural condition for such habitat. Altering native shrublands by removing portions is highly destructive and may lead to conversion of shrubland to grasses.

The Th16a PWP is based on CalFire's Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP), which provides one fuel reduction program for all State Responsibility Areas (SRA) in California, whether they are in the Sierras, the North Coast, Southern California, or San Mateo County. One response does not fit all. CalFire and the press have managed to convince the public that

the fuel reduction, that the timber industry seeks for their remote commercial forests, will make all Californians safer.

The San Mateo County (Th16a) Forest Health and Fire Resilience Public Work Plan (PWP) is not a fitting response to the state's increased wildfire risk. The solution to reducing fire risk to human communities is to make structures less flammable and to reduce vegetation around the vulnerable structures. In addition, the state and all countries must escalate their efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, that caused climate change and our increased our fire risk (through increased heat, reduced rain, and increased winds).

Yours truly,



Karen Maki
Forest Protection Committee Chair
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club

Cc: James Eggers
Executive Director
Loma Prieta Chapter Sierra Club

Gladwyn d'Souza
Conservation Committee Chair
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Mike Ferreira
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