

August 6, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

**RE: Letter of Support for the California Vegetation Treatment Program's Draft Program
Environmental Impact Report**

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection:

The San Mateo County Board of Supervisors ("Board") writes in support of the California Vegetation Treatment Program's (the "CalVTP") draft Program Environmental Impact Report ("PEIR"), dated June 24, 2019. Through the San Mateo County Parks Department, the County of San Mateo ("County") manages over 16,000 acres of parkland and open space; much of which qualifies as "treatable landscape" pursuant to the PEIR. As the County strives to take a more active management approach to land stewardship, in part because of the increasing effects of climate change, the PEIR will enable the County to more efficiently assess and implement critical fuel reduction and habitat restoration projects.

Using the treatment activities incorporated in the CalVTP, the County will also be able to reduce the threat of wildfire to its most vulnerable communities and improve overall ecosystem health. These treatment activities include the reduction of fuels within the wildland-urban interface, establishment of fuel breaks, and ecological restoration using manual, mechanical, and chemical treatment approaches. Further, while the County is working to reduce the amount of herbicide used in lieu of an integrated pest management approach to vegetation management, it acknowledges that due to the rapid rate of regrowth of non-native vegetation present in some parks, including eucalyptus trees, gorse, and broom, limited and select use of herbicides will be necessary.

Equally important is the ability to more efficiently complete projects that significantly improve the ecological value of habitat in our parks and open spaces. Through the reduction of fuel loads in eligible areas, the County can promote a historic and natural disturbance regime, reduce competition for resources within the ecosystem, and in turn enhance the health of mature trees and vegetation. This will provide benefit to both the wildlife and the habitats they are dependent on.

While implementation of the analyzed program activities has been determined to create specified impacts, some of which are considered significant and unavoidable, the adverse impacts created by wildfire are far greater. As California has experienced,

recent high intensity and catastrophic landscape-level fires have been the largest, most destructive, and deadliest wildfires on record in the state. These types of fires are destructive to habitat, have caused loss of life and property, and generate air quality levels that are hazardous to public health. The impacts from these types of wildfires far exceed those created by carefully organized and planned fuel reduction and restoration projects that are made possible through the CalVTP.

This Board appreciates the extensive work that has been dedicated to this effort. As the agency responsible for preserving San Mateo County's parkland and open space for future generations, the County is prepared to use the opportunities granted by the PEIR for the CalVTP in the most appropriate manner possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Carole Groom, President
San Mateo County Board of Supervisors