



EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor
JOHN LAIRD, Secretary for Natural Resources

Matthew Rodriguez
Secretary for
Environmental Protection

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 21, 2012

TO:

FROM: John Laird, Secretary
California Natural Resources Agency

Matthew Rodriguez, Secretary
California Environmental Protection Agency

SUBJECT: Redding Timber Harvest Review Pilot Project

In the Governor's proposed budget, the Administration made it a priority to bring efficiencies and reforms to the state's processes for reviewing and permitting timber harvesting on private lands in California. Facing difficult budgetary times, State personnel are commended for managing with reduced funding and maintaining the highest levels of environmental protection for timber harvesting in the nation. The State's timber harvest plan (THPs) reviews are inherently complex -- crossing various agencies and requiring multiple CEQA documents and CEQA-equivalent permits. The Secretaries for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Agencies see opportunities to bring efficiencies to the existing process through improved cross-agency coordination and implementation.

We are directing the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), the Department of Fish and Game (DFG), the Department of Conservation (DOC), and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board to initiate a pilot project that will create a multi-agency timber harvest group to test cross-agency coordination, program management, and review strategies. Over a one year period, the goal of the pilot is to significantly reduce processing times for timber harvest permits within the pilot area, ensure agency participation in THP review, maintain a high level of environmental protection, and to identify process improvements that could be expanded to other parts of the state. The pilot is to be accomplished within the existing resources of all of the departments.

The pilot program will be based in the Redding office of CAL FIRE and DFG and will be tasked with accomplishing the following coordination and cooperation objectives:

- 1) Build upon the already existing weekly CAL FIRE and DFG THP review meetings by including additional or extended review group meetings between all agencies at CAL FIRE's Redding office. The group will be tasked with the following priorities:
 - a) Ensure initial assessment by all relevant state agencies of all THPs that are submitted to the CAL FIRE Redding office.
 - b) Coordinate initially through the CAL FIRE Forest Practice manager the assignment of pre-harvest inspection (PHI) participants. The objective is to significantly decrease the amount of time between plan submittal and on the ground inspection. The PHI will include Lake and Streambed staff from DFG. It is understood that timelines may vary due to weather or weather related backlogs, however, the goal is to reduce THP approval process timelines. Additionally, DFG will evaluate the benefits of cross training staff and consolidation of duties as a potential efficiency measure.
 - c) Coordinate through the CAL FIRE field inspector the development of a single PHI report to include recommendations of all agencies who participated in the PHI. The objective is to significantly decrease the number of days to complete the PHI report. Through this coordination a process for dealing with situations of non-agreement will need to be developed.
 - d) Evaluate the effects of timing of the submission and review of Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement applications on the overall approval within the THP review time period
- 2) Designation of an upper management resolution team consisting of a member from each department to evaluate implementation of the pilot and mediate and resolve issues that may arise. This team would meet at least monthly with the primary THP staff leads to discuss lessons learned and modifications to the program.

- 3) Upon the conclusion of the pilot project the team will develop a lessons learned document for evaluation of the project and potential future implementation.

Through these administrative measures, efficiencies will be achieved and THP review times will decrease. Most importantly the goals and missions of the departments affected will be upheld.