



Fire Department

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HEADQUARTERS

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Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: Edith Hannigan, Board Analyst

The Santa Barbara County Fire Department supports the VTP PEIR preferred alternative for its emphasis on vegetation treatment options to modify fire behavior to help reduce losses to life, property and natural resources. Santa Barbara County has collaborated on multiple Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs) including the Montecito Fire Protection District CWPP, Mission Canyon CWPP and City of Goleta CWPP. In addition, Santa Barbara County Fire will soon complete a CWPP for the San Marcos Pass and Eastern Goleta Valley. These plans have prioritized fuel reduction projects including WUI treatments and high priority fuel breaks utilizing combinations of prescribed fire, mechanical and manual treatment methods.

The VTP is consistent and in direct alignment with the Santa Barbara County Fire Department's Strategic Unit Fire Plan which clearly identifies the need to modify fire behavior through vegetation/fuel reduction methods, specifically utilizing strategically placed treatments focused to protect Santa Barbara County's numerous values at risk.

Treatments described in the above mentioned CWPPs are consistent with the Mission Canyon CWPP and the soon-to-be-completed San Marcos Pass CWPP and would be implemented on privately owned land within the SRA and implemented by Santa Barbara County Fire – Contract County through contract or agreement.

The VTP would provide the streamlined CEQA analysis, significantly reducing the need for repetitive process of multiple CEQA documents, reducing cost and time to the department and land owner with limited resources.

At the close of the 2017, high severity wildfires including the Thomas Fire – the largest fire in California history – severely affected Santa Barbara County and thus, this program is long overdue. While the impacts of climate change suggest an accelerated risk of wildfire becoming the "new normal", there should be no further delay implementing the VTP in California.

Sincerely,

Eric L. Peterson
Fire Chief