

County of Santa Clara

Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency

Agriculture and Environmental Management
1553 Berger Drive, Building 1 San Jose, CA 95112
80 W. Highland Avenue, Building K San Martin, CA 95046
12425 Monterey Road, San Martin, CA 95046

Vector Control District
1580 Berger Drive, San Jose, CA 95112



<https://cepa.santaclaracounty.gov>

December 17, 2024

Dear Property Owner,

The County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Program sent a packet of information to you on December 13, 2024, describing requirements for compliance with minimum fire safety standards on your property during the fire season. It has come to my attention that a typographical error was made pertaining to the date of the public hearing in your jurisdiction. Please see the attached Notice to Destroy with the corrected date of the public hearing listed as **January 21, 2024, at 7:00 PM, and will be held at 110 E Main St, Los Gatos, CA 95030 in the Council Chambers.**

I apologize for any confusion this may have caused. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me directly by phone at 408-282-3186 or by email at Garik.iosilevsky@cep.sccgov.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Garik Iosilevsky". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light blue horizontal line.

Garik Iosilevsky
Weed Abatement Manager
County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Program
408-282-3186
Garik.iosilevsky@cep.sccgov.org

Notice to Destroy Weeds

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 3, 2024, pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.20.020 of the Town Code of the Town of Los Gatos, the Town Council of said Town adopted a Resolution declaring that all weeds growing upon any private property or in any street, sidewalk or alley, as defined in Section 11.20.020 of such code, constitute a public nuisance, which nuisance must be abated by the destruction or removal thereof.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that property owners shall within thirty days after the adoption of such resolution, or within the time specified in a written agreement with the Director of Parks and Public Works of the Town of Los Gatos, or the Director of Parks and Public Works' representative, whichever time shall be later, remove all such weeds from their property, the abutting sidewalks, and the abutting half of the street in front, and alleys, if any, behind such property, and between the lot lines thereof as extended, or such weeds will be destroyed or removed and such nuisance abated by the Town of Los Gatos, in which case the cost of such destruction or removal will be assessed upon the lots and lands from which, or from the front or rear of which, such weeds shall have been destroyed or removed; and such cost will constitute a lien upon such lots or lands until paid, and will be collected upon the next tax roll upon which general municipal taxes are collected. All property owners having any objections to the proposed destruction or removal of such weeds are hereby notified to attend a meeting of the Town Council of such Town to be held in the Council Chambers of said Town at 110 East Main Street, Los Gatos, California, on **Tuesday, January 21, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.**, or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, when their objections will be heard and given due consideration. *The language and format for this notice is required by California Health and Safety Code Sections 14891 Et. Seq.*

LOS GATOS WEED ABATEMENT PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| January 21, 2025 | Public hearing to consider objections to Abatement List. |
| April 15, 2025 | <u>PARCEL ABATEMENT DEADLINE</u>
Parcel must be free from hazardous vegetation by this date or Inspector will order abatement. |
| July-August, 2025 | Assessment Hearing to protest abatement charges
(Date subject to change, please confirm with City Clerk) |

2025 COUNTY WEED ABATEMENT FEES

Properties in the Weed Abatement Program, you will be responsible for an annual inspection fee of \$105.00 per parcel.

Please be advised that the property owner of any parcel found to be non-compliant on or after the April 15th deadline will be charged a processing fee of \$597.00 and the property will be scheduled for abatement by the County contractor. If you complete the abatement work before the County contractor performs the abatement, you will not incur further charges. Should the abatement work be performed by a County contractor, you will be assessed the contractor's charges plus a County administrative fee of \$961.00 per parcel. For those parcels requiring a warrant a fee of \$1,323.00 per parcel will be assessed.

2025 COUNTY CONTRACTOR'S WEED ABATEMENT PRICE LIST

A) Disc Work**

PARCEL SIZE:	1 st Disc	+ 2 nd Disc	= Total Discs
0-12,500 sq.ft.	<u>\$ TBD</u>	<u>\$ TBD</u>	<u>\$ TBD</u>
12,501sq.ft.- 43,560sq.ft.	<u>\$ TBD</u>	<u>\$ TBD</u>	<u>\$ TBD</u>
Larger than 1 Acre	<u>\$ TBD</u>	<u>\$ TBD</u>	<u>\$ TBD</u> (PER ACRE)

** It is required that parcels be disced twice a year. The cost for the first discing is higher due to additional work normally required during the first discing.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| B) HANDWORK | <u>\$ TBD PER 100 Square Feet (SF)</u> |
| C) FLAIL | <u>6 Foot Mower \$ TBD PER 1,000 SF</u> |
| MOWING | <u>12 Foot Mower \$ TBD PER 1,000 SF</u> |
| D) LOADER WORK | <u>\$ TBD PER HOUR</u> |
| E) DUMP TRUCK | <u>\$ TBD PER HOUR</u> |
| F) BRUSH WORK | <u>\$ TBD PER 100 SF</u> |
| G) DEBRIS REMOVAL | <u>\$ TBD PER HOUR</u> |
| H) DUMP FEE | <u>100%</u> |

Added to orders with debris removal at 100% of the dump site charge.

***Please note this program does not offer herbicide application as a method of abatement.**

County of Santa Clara

Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency

Agriculture and Environmental Management
1553 Berger Drive, Building 1 San Jose, CA 95112
80 W. Highland Avenue, Building K San Martin, CA 95046
12425 Monterey Road, San Martin, CA 95046

Vector Control District
1580 Berger Drive, San Jose, CA 95112
Fax (408) 286-2460



<http://cepa.santaclaracounty.gov>

December 10, 2024

IMPORTANT NOTICE TO ABATE WEEDS

Dear Parcel Owner:

Fire safety is essential to protect lives, preserve property, ensure the well-being of our communities, and minimize the environmental impact. Implementing fire safety measures by removing fire hazards from your parcel is a proactive way to reduce the risk of injury, death, and extensive damage caused by fires. Effective prevention and preparedness measures not only save lives but also safeguard our environment and reduce economic losses. Maintaining proper clearance requirements, known as *Minimum Fire Safety Standards*, is a shared responsibility. Since fire doesn't respect property boundaries, your jurisdictional city (or County if in unincorporated areas) contracts with the County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Program to ensure that all parcels meet these *Minimum Fire Safety Standards* obligations. You are receiving this notice and information because our team has determined that your parcel is under the jurisdiction of the Weed Abatement Program. Please read the information carefully and contact us for clarification or additional information.

The governing body representing this parcel has or will adopt a resolution declaring your parcel as one that may contain fire hazards from weeds or other debris. Following this action, your governing body will conduct a public Commencement Hearing as part of a public meeting to consider an abatement order requiring you to remove any hazardous vegetation or combustible debris before the deadline in the included *Weed Abatement Program Schedule*. The public Commencement Hearing will be held on the date and at the place stated in the enclosed *Notice to Destroy*. It will provide an opportunity for you to raise any objections or concerns about this requirement and the parcel being on the Weed Abatement Program.

If you believe your parcel includes an environmentally sensitive habitat, please check the box on the blue *Return Reply Form* and provide any additional information on the *Return Reply Form* to assist us in determining the best approach to abating your parcel from fire hazards.

If, after the public Commencement Hearing, the Weed Abatement Program is approved for your parcel, the County is authorized by your city, and the California Health and Safety Code sections §14875-14922 to inspect your parcel to confirm that the parcel has been cleared of hazards and is compliant with *Minimum Fire Safety Standards* (see enclosed brochure). Inspections will begin after the abatement deadline for your jurisdiction. This notice does not relieve you of your responsibility to complete the necessary work before your jurisdiction's deadline. All parcels designated to be part of the Weed Abatement Program will have a \$105 annual inspection fee to cover the cost of the program. This \$105 cost will be included on your property tax bill as a special assessment.

In addition to the \$105 annual inspection fee, if the parcel is found non-compliant at the time of our inspection, the parcel will be assessed a processing fee of \$597 per parcel, and the property will be scheduled for abatement by the County-designated contractor. You will not incur additional charges if the abatement work is completed before the County-designated contractor arrives. However, should the County-designated contractor perform the abatement work, the parcel will incur the cost associated with the contractor's work plus an additional County administrative fee of \$961 per parcel.

For those parcels requiring a warrant, a fee of \$1,323 per parcel will be assessed.

The County will use the lowest cost method of abatement considering the physical characteristics of your property and any other environmental or related concerns. Fees are detailed on the price list included in the *Notice to Destroy*. The total amount of fees incurred will be included as a special assessment on your property tax bill following confirmation of the charges by your city (or the County if the parcel is in an unincorporated area) at a public Assessment Hearing. This Assessment Hearing will be scheduled in late spring/early summer, with the exact date determined by your governing body. Typically, Assessment Hearing information is posted at the physical location of the governing body (typically at a city hall building or other government center and most also publish this information on their websites) prior to the meeting.

You can avoid all costs, other than the \$105 annual inspection fee, by completing the abatement work yourself according to Minimum Fire Safety Standards (see enclosed brochure) prior to the abatement deadline for your jurisdiction and maintaining the Minimum Fire Safety Standards for the duration of fire season, which typically runs March through October. Parcels will be removed from the program after three consecutive years of voluntary compliance (work completed by parcel owner prior to the deadline and confirmed by our inspection).

In preparation for this program, please complete and return the enclosed blue *Return Reply Form* so we are notified of your plans for abating your property.

If you designate on your *Return Reply Form* that you intend to abate the weeds yourself, you need to complete the abatement before the deadline listed on the attached abatement program schedule and maintain fire-safe conditions for the duration of the fire season. Responding that you intend to provide maintenance does not release you from this responsibility to have the maintenance *completed* before your deadline and *repeated* as necessary to maintain Minimum Fire Safe Standards. The County will abate hazardous vegetation as required after the deadline for your jurisdiction at your cost.

Enclosed you will find the following information:

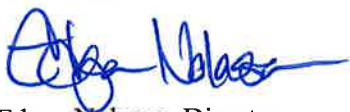
- √ ***Return Reply Form* specific to your parcel. Please complete and return it to us.**
- √ ***Notice to Destroy Weeds* informing you of an upcoming public Commencement Hearing (that you may attend if you have any objections to the proposed removal of hazardous vegetation or debris from your parcel). Your jurisdiction may offer you the ability to participate in this meeting virtually; please confirm directly with your jurisdiction.**
- √ ***Weed Abatement Program Schedule* for your city with current County abatement fees.**
- √ ***County of Santa Clara Weed Abatement Brochure*.**

Please be aware that any abatement performed by the County must comply with all applicable regulations. If your property falls within an area designated as possible habitat for burrowing owls or any other protected species of bird or animal, the methods used to remove vegetation may be regulated by specific laws or local ordinances.

If you are no longer the parcel owner identified by this mailing, please notify us immediately at (408) 282-3145. If you sell your parcel after the date of this letter, it is your responsibility to notify the new owner and include the obligation to pay any abatement costs in your sale agreement. Without taking this action, you will be responsible for all hazard abatement charges assessed to the parcel.

Our goals are voluntary compliance with the Minimum Fire Safety Standards and that all properties remain safe from fire. If you have any questions or need on-site advice to help you achieve compliance with the Minimum Fire Safety Standards, please call us at (408) 282-3145.

Sincerely,



Edgar Nolasco, Director
Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency

Notice to Destroy Weeds

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that on December 3, 2024, pursuant to the provisions of Section 11.20.020 of the Town Code of the Town of Los Gatos, the Town Council of said Town adopted a Resolution declaring that all weeds growing upon any private property or in any street, sidewalk or alley, as defined in Section 11.20.020 of such code, constitute a public nuisance, which nuisance must be abated by the destruction or removal thereof.

NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that property owners shall within thirty days after the adoption of such resolution, or within the time specified in a written agreement with the Director of Parks and Public Works of the Town of Los Gatos, or the Director of Parks and Public Works' representative, whichever time shall be later, remove all such weeds from their property, the abutting sidewalks, and the abutting half of the street in front, and alleys, if any, behind such property, and between the lot lines thereof as extended, or such weeds will be destroyed or removed and such nuisance abated by the Town of Los Gatos, in which case the cost of such destruction or removal will be assessed upon the lots and lands from which, or from the front or rear of which, such weeds shall have been destroyed or removed; and such cost will constitute a lien upon such lots or lands until paid, and will be collected upon the next tax roll upon which general municipal taxes are collected. All property owners having any objections to the proposed destruction or removal of such weeds are hereby notified to attend a meeting of the Town Council of such Town to be held in the Council Chambers of said Town at 110 East Main Street, Los Gatos, California, on **Tuesday, January 2, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.**, or as soon thereafter as the matter can be heard, when their objections will be heard and given due consideration. *The language and format for this notice is required by California Health and Safety Code Sections 14891 Et. Seq.*

LOS GATOS WEED ABATEMENT PROGRAM SCHEDULE

- January 2, 2025** Public hearing to consider objections to Abatement List.
- April 15, 2025** PARCEL ABATEMENT DEADLINE
Parcel must be free from hazardous vegetation by this date or Inspector will order abatement.
- July-August, 2025** Assessment Hearing to protest abatement charges
(Date subject to change, please confirm with City Clerk)

2025 COUNTY WEED ABATEMENT FEES

Properties in the Weed Abatement Program, you will be responsible for an annual inspection fee of \$105.00 per parcel.

Please be advised that the property owner of any parcel found to be non-compliant on or after the April 15th deadline will be charged a processing fee of \$597.00 and the property will be scheduled for abatement by the County contractor. If you complete the abatement work before the County contractor performs the abatement, you will not incur further charges. Should the abatement work be performed by a County contractor, you will be assessed the contractor's charges plus a County administrative fee of \$961.00 per parcel. For those parcels requiring a warrant a fee of \$1,323.00 per parcel will be assessed.

2025 COUNTY CONTRACTOR'S WEED ABATEMENT PRICE LIST

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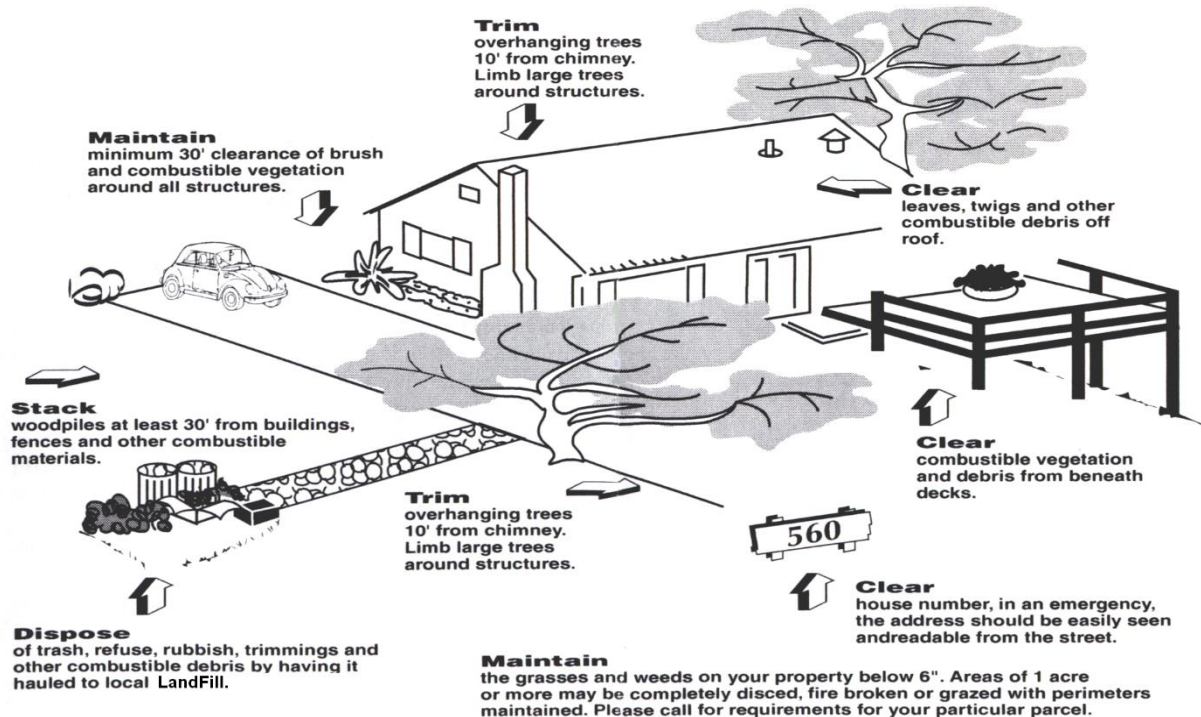
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D) LOADER WORK	<u>\$ TBD PER HOUR</u>
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F) BRUSH WORK	<u>\$ TBD PER 100 SF</u>
G) DEBRIS REMOVAL	<u>\$ TBD PER HOUR</u>
H) DUMP FEE	<u>100%</u>

Added to orders with debris removal at 100% of the dump site charge.

***Please note this program does not offer herbicide application as a method of abatement.**

MINIMUM FIRE SAFETY STANDARDS (MFSS)

1. **Vegetation must not exceed 6 inches in height any time after the compliance deadline.**
2. Maintain grasses and weeds below 6 inches for 10 feet horizontally on both sides of all roadways, including driveways and access routes. Roads and driveways must maintain a clearance of 10' W by 13'6" H for all vegetation.
3. Clear flammable vegetation a minimum of 30 feet around any structure, occupied or not. Ornamental vegetation should be kept clear of dead material. Some conditions, such as slopes, may require up to a 100 foot clearance.
4. Parcels one acre or less shall be completely abated. Parcels over one acre up to five acres require 30 foot clearance around structures and perimeter property lines. Additional 30 foot cross fuel breaks may also be required.
5. Parcels larger than five acres require 30 foot clearance around structures and perimeter property lines in addition to 30-foot cross fuel breaks as needed to separate the remaining vegetation into sections no larger than five acres.
6. Keep property clear of accumulation of combustible debris, such as trash, wood, and dead vegetation. Stacked firewood and neatly piled yard waste is not considered to be combustible debris.
7. Keep vegetation cleared from under the eaves of houses.
8. Trim tree branches to at least 10 feet away from chimneys. Trim tree branches up from the ground to provide at least 6 feet of vertical clearance.
9. Clear leaves, pine needles and debris from roof and gutters.



Fire Resistant Landscaping

The following is a partial list of fire resistant plants that you may choose to use around your home to reduce the risk of fire. Contact your local nursery for selections appropriate to your area. All grasses, including those purportedly fire resistant, must be maintained below 6" in height.

Trees:

African Sumac
California Pepper

Shrubs:

Bearberry
Carmel Creeper
Carolina Cherry
Catalina Cherry

Escallonia

Hopseed Bush
Lemonade Berry

Groundcover:

Aaron's Beard
Australian Daisy
Candytuft
Sterile Capeweed

Freeway Daisy

Rock Rose (except Gum Variety)

Fire Safety Through Vegetation Management

Santa Clara County

Consumer and Environmental
Protection Agency

Weed Abatement Program



1553 Berger Drive #1

San Jose, Ca 95112

Phone (408) 282-3145

Fax: (408) 286-2460

SCC.WeedAbatement@cep.sccgov.org

The Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program

The Santa Clara County Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency and your city are working together to protect your community from fire. We need your help. Please read and follow the directions provided in this brochure regarding fire prevention on your property. The purpose of the Weed Abatement Program is to prevent fire hazards posed by vegetative growth and the accumulation of combustible materials.

The Weed Abatement program is entirely funded from fees charged to residents. Fees will be assessed for any property in the program. This is to cover the cost of the compliance inspection for the property. Properties that fail the compliance inspection will be charged a failed inspection fee, even if the resident completes the weed abatement. If the property requires abatement by the County contractor, the property owner will be responsible for the actual cost of abatement plus an administrative fee. Properties that meet and maintain the minimum fire safety standards will not be charged other than the annual fee.

Program staff annually inspect parcels at the beginning of the fire season, which is typically in March or April depending on your jurisdiction. If the parcel is not in compliance at the time of inspection, the property owner will be charged a failed inspection fee, and the owner will be sent a courtesy notice as a reminder to abate the weeds. If the weeds are not abated by the property owner, the work will be completed by the County contractor. The property owner will pay the contractor's fees plus a County administrative fee. All fees will be included in your property tax bill.

Our Goal Is Voluntary Compliance

Property Owner's Responsibilities

- Do not allow a fire hazard to exist on your property. The Minimum Fire Safety Standards (MFSS) in this brochure give you guidelines to follow in order to maintain your property and protect against a fire hazard. **Please contact our office if you need guidance or have any questions regarding the requirements!**
- Make arrangements to have your property maintained throughout the year. Contractors can be found in the yellow pages. You may choose to have the County contractor maintain your property. A current price list is included in your packet.
- Please complete and return the Reply Form provided in your mailing packet by the date on the form. Indicate your preference regarding performance of weed abatement services.

Program Staff Responsibilities

- Weed Abatement Inspectors will perform periodic inspections on all parcels included in the Santa Clara County Weed Abatement Program. Properties that fail the compliance inspection will be charged a failed inspection fee, even if the resident completes the weed abatement.

- Inspectors will order the County contractor to perform all necessary abatement work on any parcel where the MFSS are not met. An attempt will be made to give the owner a courtesy notice prior to releasing the work order.
- The County contractor uses several methods of abatement including discing and handwork. The property owner is free to select whatever method they choose, provided the MFSS of all federal, state and local laws are met.
- The Weed Abatement Program will place inspection costs and the charges for County contractor services plus a County administrative fee on the property owner's tax bill during the next fiscal year.

Burrowing Owls

These small owls nest in abandoned ground squirrel burrows. Discing collapses the burrows and kills the young. These owls are listed as a state Species of Special Concern and are protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If you suspect burrowing owls on your property you **must** use another form of weed abatement such as mowing or weed-eating. If you request the County perform abatement services, please notify program staff or your City if burrowing owls are known to exist on your property.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Why have I received an Abatement Notice?

A. Typically, a property is placed on the program if a Weed Abatement Inspector identified a potential fire hazard on the property. Fire Departments and other agencies also submit complaints to the Weed Abatement Program.

Q. What is required of me now that I am in the Program?

A. All property owners are required to maintain their property free of fire hazards throughout the year.

Q. The grasses planted on my property are fire resistant. Are they exempt from the Weed Abatement program?

A. No. Even grasses that possess some fire resistant qualities are not fire proof, and they can add fuel to any site that is subject to a fire. Additionally, fire resistant grasses are rarely found in a pure, homogenous stand but rather are usually found to occur mixed with other common introduced annual grasses that are highly flammable and hazardous in a fire event. Finally, many grasses occur in Santa Clara County and species identification is difficult in the field, especially after the spring when the reproductive portions required for identification have dried and dispersed. Weed Abatement Inspectors can only focus on the presence of grasses and weeds on your property and the Minimum Fire Safety Standards, and not on grass species identification. Therefore, all grasses are required to be below 6 inches in height.

Q. What is the SC County Weed Abatement Program?

A. This is a monitoring program and our primary objective is voluntary compliance. See the first two paragraphs of this brochure for further specifics.

More FAQ:

Q. How long will I be on the Program?

A. Your property will remain on the Program for three years. If no hazards are found during that time, your property may be removed from the program.

Q. How much will this cost me?

A. There will be an annual fee to cover the cost of the compliance inspection. If the parcel does not meet the MFSS when it is first inspected in the spring, or if work is required by the County contractor, you will be charged additional fees. Our goal is to ensure that the MFSS are met at the lowest possible cost to the property owner.

Q. How will I be billed?

A. Any charges for the inspection and any abatement work performed will appear as a special assessment on your next property tax bill.

Q. Why have you performed work on my property while the vegetation is still green?

A. Grass, weeds or piles of combustible debris have been declared a public nuisance by your jurisdiction. Abating fire hazards in the spring minimizes the volume of combustible material before the hazards increase and dries out completely during the peak fire season.

Q. Will you notify me prior to beginning abatement work?

A. Property owners are responsible for preventing fire hazards on their property. If the MFSS have been met, but further work is necessary, you will receive notice prior to the County contractor performing the work. If the MFSS have **not** been met, an attempt will be made to give the owner a courtesy notice prior to initial abatement.

Q. Where can I find someone to provide abatement services?

A. Weed Abatement contractors can be found in the Yellow Pages under "Weed Control Services" or "Discing Services". You may have the County contractor perform the necessary work; see your mailing packet for a current price list as administrative costs are charged.

Q. How can I get additional information or assistance regarding the specific requirements for my property?

A. Weed Abatement Inspectors are available to assist you and answer your questions. Please call our Customer Service line at (408) 282-3145 to schedule a consultation with program staff or to obtain additional information.

Q. I have Grazing Animals do I need to perform abatement?

A. Grazing animals do not absolve you of your responsibilities to provide a fire safe condition on your property. You will need to check with our office to determine if grazing is adequate or if additional work is required.

County of Santa Clara

Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency
Weed Abatement Division

1553 Berger Drive
Building 1
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 282-3145
Fax (408) 286-2460



AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

Notice of Public Hearing for the Jurisdictions of:

Los Gatos

Madeline Wieh, declares as follows: That he/she is a citizen of the United States, over the age of 18 years, that at all times herein mentioned was an employee/agent of the County of Santa Clara.

Madeline Wieh, deposited in the United States Post Office, California, a Notice of Hearing, a copy of which is attached hereto. That said mailing list has been provided by the applicant and lists the owners of property who are entitled to Notice of Hearing. That on said day, there was a regular communication by United States mail between San Jose, California and the addresses shown on the attached mailing list.

I declare under penalty of perjury that
the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 12/18/24

By: Madeline Wieh

1553 Berger Drive
Building 1
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 282-3123

County of Santa Clara

Consumer and Environmental Protection Agency
Weed Abatement Division



1553 Berger Drive
Building 1
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 282-3145
Fax (408) 286-2460

AFFIDAVIT OF MAILING

Notice of Public Hearing for the Jurisdictions of:

Los Gatos

Madeline Wien, declares as follows: That he/she is a citizen of the United States, over the age of 18 years, that at all times herein mentioned was an employee/agent of the County of Santa Clara.

Madeline Wien, deposited in the United States Post Office, California, a Notice of Hearing, a copy of which is attached hereto. That said mailing list has been provided by the applicant and lists the owners of property who are entitled to Notice of Hearing. That on said day, there was a regular communication by United States mail between San Jose, California and the addresses shown on the attached mailing list.

I declare under penalty of perjury that
the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: 12/13/24

By: Madeline Wien

1553 Berger Drive
Building 1
San Jose, CA 95112
(408) 282-3123