



DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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April 6, 2016

President Michael Picker
California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102

Dear President Picker:

Thank you for meeting with my staff and me last week regarding coordinating on implementing the tree mortality emergency proclamation and specific directives related to bioenergy contracting. We look forward to meeting with you, Commissioner Peterman and the Governor's staff on May 2nd to continue coordinating on implementing the proclamation.

As we discussed, the proclamation directs CPUC to expedite bioenergy contracts for facilities receiving feedstock from the high hazard zones. CAL Fire is directed to identify areas of the State that represent high hazard zones for wildfire and falling trees using best available science and geospatial data. CAL FIRE has adopted the statewide definition of high hazard zones and has completed designating these zones in specific areas around the State. This geospatial data is posted in GIS Map Viewer format on the following website www.treetaskforce.org.

The definition is as follows:

HHZ Direct (Tier 1): *These high hazard zones are in close proximity to communities, roads, and utility lines. They represent a direct threat to public safety.*

HHZ Indirect (Tier 2): *These high hazard zones are defined by watersheds (HUC 12) that have significant tree mortality, combined with community and natural resource assets. Work at the Tier 2 level supports broader forest health and landscape level fire planning issues.*

The intent is that the HHZ definition includes both Tier 1 and 2 for purposes of CPUC policies and programs. In addition to the map, a description of the watershed scoring methodology for HHZ is available on the website. The HHZ watershed scoring is consistent with analytical methods that support CAL FIRE Unit level fire plans.

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April 7, 2016
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HHZ will be updated periodically to reflect new data from tree mortality surveys and improved asset information. Initially the data will be updated as frequently as quarterly to ensure current data on tree mortality is incorporated. CAL FIRE will not contract or delete sections of the HHZ for the first 5 years of the Bio MAT and RAM programs. After this 5-year period, CAL FIRE will re-evaluate HHZ in relation to tree mortality, wildfire, and asset status. It is anticipated that tree mortality will persist and expand over the next year and beyond, and will take up to 5 years before the existing large volume of impacted trees and associated vegetation is removed to properly address public safety and fire risk concerns. However, more time will be needed to remove additional mortality if the drought persists or new insect and disease breakouts occur.

I look forward to continuing to work with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



KEN PIMLOTT
Director

cc: Commissioner Carla Peterman
Cliff Rechtschaffen
Martha Guzman-Aceves
Edward Randolph