



## **NOTICE OF CATEGORICAL EXEMPTION**

**Sonoma County Permit and Resource Management Department**  
2550 Ventura Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95403  
(707) 565-1900 Fax (707) 565-8358

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Sonoma County proposes to carry out the following project. Pursuant to Section 23A-11 of the Sonoma County Code, it has been determined that this project is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act:

**Project Title:** Adoption of an Ordinance of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sonoma, State of California, Amending the Sonoma County Code and the Previously Adopted 2007 California Building Code with Respect to the Regulation of Grading, Drainage, and Vineyard and Orchard Site Development.

**Project Location:** Countywide

**Lead Agency:** Sonoma County

**Decision Making Body:** Sonoma County Board of Supervisors

**Date of Approval:** October 21, 2008

**Project Applicant:** Sonoma County

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### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

Current regulations that affect grading, erosion and sediment control, and drainage are not well-organized or “user friendly,” with various provisions included in the Uniform Building Code (UBC) and Chapters 7, 11, 26, and 30 of the Sonoma County Code. This organization is confusing and has given the misperception that the County does not have grading regulations.

The proposed ordinance seeks to consolidate all grading, drainage, and vineyard and orchard site development related code provisions into one comprehensive and user friendly chapter (Chapter 11) of the Sonoma County Code (SCC). Many of these provisions are new, and carry out the recommendations of the Grading Ordinance Working Group (GOWG) and direction of the Board of Supervisors. The heart of the proposed ordinance is Section VII, which sets forth the standards and permit requirements for grading, drainage, and vineyard and orchard site development activities.

Most of the remaining proposed ordinance consists of the “housekeeping” necessary to conform the rest of the Sonoma County Code to the new Chapter 11. The proposed ordinance must show deletions indicating the relocation of existing code provisions from their current locations into the proposed chapter, essentially moving the provisions without changing their substance. There are other instances in which outdated provisions are proposed for modification or deletion.

In addition, in December 2007 the County updated the SCC in response to changes in the California Building Code (CBC). The proposed ordinance is an opportunity to revise some SCC provisions to more accurately reflect the CBC changes. Most if not all of the CBC edits are technical and non-substantive.

The proposed ordinance also establishes project exemptions, based on project type, project sponsor, project size or other physical parameters. However, while exemptions are established, these exemptions merely eliminate the requirement to obtain a permit. All other provisions of the ordinance, including the use of best management practices to prevent environmental degradation, still apply to the exempted projects.

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**REASON WHY THIS PROJECT IS EXEMPT:**

The proposed ordinance is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) pursuant to Sections 15307 and 15308 of the State CEQA Guidelines as an action taken to assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and protection of natural resources and the environment where the regulatory process involves procedures for protection of the environment, and pursuant to Section 15061(b)(3) of the State CEQA Guidelines because it can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that this ordinance may have a significant effect on the environment. The basis for this determination is that this ordinance does not in itself approve any construction activities, but instead establishes standards, permit requirements, and other measures that regulate grading, drainage, and vineyard and orchard site development more stringently than existing codes. These standards, permit requirements, and other measures will not result in any direct physical change to the environment on their own, and will instead assure the maintenance, restoration, enhancement, and protection of natural resources and the environment by strengthening existing environmental standards and establishing new limitations. The Director of the Permit and Resource Management Department is directed to file a notice of exemption in accordance with CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines.

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This Notice of Exemption is filed pursuant to the provisions of Section 15062 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

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Permit and Resource Management Department  
(707) 565-8351