

Midcoast Community Council

An elected Advisory Council to the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors

representing Montara, Moss Beach, El Granada, Princeton, and Miramar

PO Box 248, Moss Beach, CA 94038-0248 | midcoastcommunitycouncil.org

Michelle Weil | **Claire Toutant** | **Dave Olson** | **Len Erickson** | **Gregg Dieguez** | **Jill Grant** | **Dan Haggerty**
Chair Vice-Chair Secretary Treasurer

Date: May 12, 2021
To: Steve Monowitz, Director, San Mateo County Planning Department
Cc: San Mateo County Board of Supervisors
 San Mateo County Planning Commission
From: Midcoast Community Council
Subject: **Permitting for Eucalyptus Removal**

As a representative of the Midcoast, the MCC has received many requests from residents to help reduce the very significant risk of fire to the community. This is especially urgent since there has been no meaningful evacuation plan in the event of fire.

Much of the immediate concern centers on the dense concentration of eucalyptus trees, especially in El Granada. The County has plans which it hopes will mitigate fire danger in Quarry Park itself, but many potentially hazardous conditions also are found on private property. A number of residents have expressed an eagerness to remove hazardous growth from their properties but have found that County regulations made this practically and financially difficult.

Landowners are willing to put their own efforts into improving community safety, but they need the support of government.

The MCC supports the residents' efforts to make the community safer by drawing your attention to the following:

- The unincorporated County has made eucalyptus removal more difficult than neighboring jurisdictions, such as Pacifica, Half Moon Bay and Woodside Fire Protection District have.
- The County estimates that processing tree-removal permits takes one to two months, and recent efforts to remove eucalyptus have taken much longer.
- Removing eucalyptus can be costly, including fees of \$60-155 per tree as well as the costs of actually removing the tree, with associated costs of disposal and restoration.

We therefore urge the following actions:

1. County permits for the removal of eucalyptus should be free to individual property owners and should be issued within 72 hours of fully-completed application for permit. Approved measures should be taken to ensure that regrowth does not occur. Every effort should be made to replace trees with native and fire-resistant vegetation.

2. Completion of the Board of Supervisors' current efforts to streamline fuel reduction and the permitting process for eucalyptus removal.
3. The long-delayed County Tree Ordinance should be completed, but these measures need to be expedited in light of the impending fire season.

We ask you to address these matters quickly so that action can be taken.

MIDCOAST COMMUNITY COUNCIL
s/Michelle Weil, Chair