

DEPARTMENT OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
Title 3 of the California Code of Regulations

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking

45 – Day Notice

The Department of Food and Agriculture amended subsection 3700(c) of the regulations in Title 3 of the California Code of Regulations pertaining to Oak Mortality Disease Control (Sudden Oak Death (SOD)) as an emergency action which was effective on November 27, 2013. The Department proposes to continue the regulation as amended and to complete the amendment process by submission of a Certificate of Compliance no later than May 27, 2014.

This notice is being provided to be in compliance with Government Code Section 11346.4.

PUBLIC HEARING

A public hearing is not scheduled. A public hearing will be held if any interested person, or his or her duly authorized representative, submits a written request for a public hearing to the Department no later than 15 days prior to the close of the written comment period.

WRITTEN COMMENT PERIOD

Any interested person or his or her authorized representative may submit written comments relevant to the proposed amendment to the Department. Comments may be submitted by mail, facsimile (FAX) at 916.654.1018 or by email to sbrown@cdfa.ca.gov. The written comment period closes at 5:00 p.m. on January 20, 2014. The Department will consider only comments received at the Department offices by that time. Submit comments to:

Stephen Brown
Department of Food and Agriculture
Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services
1220 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
sbrown@cdfa.ca.gov
916.654.1017
916.654.1018 (FAX)

Following the public hearing if one is requested, or following the written comment period if no public hearing is requested, the Department of Food and Agriculture, at its own motion, or at the instance of any interested person, may adopt the proposal substantially as set forth without further notice.

INFORMATIVE DIGEST/POLICY STATEMENT OVERVIEW

Existing law provides that the Secretary is obligated to investigate the existence of any pest that is not generally distributed within this state and determine the probability of its spread and the feasibility of its control or eradication (FAC Section 5321).

Existing law also provides that the Secretary may establish, maintain and enforce quarantine, eradication and other such regulations as he deems necessary to protect the agricultural industry from the introduction and spread of pests (FAC Sections 401, 403, 407 and 5322).

Anticipated Benefits from This Regulatory Action

Existing law, FAC section 22, finds that the planned production of trees shall be considered a branch of the agricultural industry of the state for the purposes of any law which provides for the benefit or protection of the agricultural industry of the state.

Existing law, FAC subsection 23(a), finds that the planned production of bushes, ornamental plants, floricultural crops, and other horticultural crops is distinguishable from the production of other products of the soil only in relation to the time elapsing before maturity, plants and floricultural crops that are being produced by nurseries, whether in open fields or in greenhouses, shall be considered to be "growing agricultural crops" for the purpose of any laws that pertain to the agricultural industry of the state, and those laws shall apply equally to greenhouses and open field nursery operations.

Existing law, FAC section 24, states that as a matter of legislative determination, that the provisions of this section are enacted in the exercise of the power of this state for the purpose of protecting and furthering the public health and welfare. It is further declared that the floriculture and nursery industry of this state is affected with a public interest, in that, among other things:

(a) The production, processing, manufacture, and distribution of floriculture and nursery products constitute a paramount industry of this state which not only provides substantial and required revenues for the state and its political subdivisions by tax revenues and other means, and employment and a means of livelihood for many thousands of its population, but also furnishes substantial employment to related industries that are vital to the public health and welfare.

Existing law, FAC section 24.5, states "Inasmuch as plants growing in native stands or planted for ornamental purposes contribute to the environmental and public health and welfare needs of the people of the state, the Legislature hereby finds and declares that such plants shall be considered as a part of the agricultural industry for the purpose of any law that provides for the protection of the agricultural industry from pests."

Existing law, FAC section 403, provides that the department shall prevent the introduction and spread of injurious insect or animal pests, plant diseases, and noxious weeds.

Existing law, FAC section 407, provides that the Secretary may adopt such regulations as are reasonably necessary to carry out the provisions of this code which she is directed or authorized to administer or enforce.

Existing law, FAC section 5321, provides that the Secretary is obligated to investigate the existence of any pest that is not generally distributed within this State and determine the probability of its spread, and the feasibility of its control or eradication.

Existing law, FAC section 5322, provides that the Secretary may establish, maintain, and enforce quarantine, eradication, and such other regulations as are in her opinion necessary to circumscribe and exterminate or prevent the spread of any pest which is described in FAC section 5321.

The non-monetary benefits of this regulation include meetings the Department's various statutory obligations and goals listed above. While the existing law also obligates the Secretary to investigate and determine the feasibility of controlling or eradicating pests of limited distribution, it establishes discretion with regard to the establishment and maintenance of regulations to achieve this goal. This amendment provides the necessary regulatory authority to prevent the artificial spread of a serious insect pest which is also a mandated statutory goal.

The amendment of this regulation benefits the nursery industry (growers, wholesalers, retailers, exporters) and its consumers, Christmas tree growers and their consumers, firefighters (local, State and federal), local governments, home owners, indigenous people, the State's forests, the general population of this State and the environment by having a control program to prevent the artificial spread of SOD over long distances. Most all of the larger nursery stock producers are located outside the existing regulated area.

Consumers benefit by having higher quality host material free from the symptoms of SOD available at an overall lower cost. It is assumed that any increases in statewide production costs would ultimately be passed on the consumer.

The amendment of this regulation benefits homeowners who already have host material which is planted as ornamentals in various rural and urban landscapes.

FAC Section 401.5 states, "the department shall seek to protect the general welfare and economy of the state and seek to maintain the economic well-being of agriculturally dependent rural communities in this state." The amendment of this regulation is preventing the artificial spread of SOD to uninfested areas of the State.

There is no existing, comparable federal regulation or statute regulating the intrastate movement.

The Department is the only agency which can implement plant quarantines. As required by Government Code Section 11346.5(a)(3)(D), the Department has conducted an evaluation of this regulation and has determined that it is not inconsistent or incompatible with existing State regulations.

AMENDED TEXT

This emergency amendment of subsection 3700(c) established *Gaultheria procumbens* (wintergreen, Eastern teaberry, boxberry) as an associated article under the articles and commodities covered by the regulation. The effect of the changes to the regulation is to provide authority for the Department to regulate movement of this new “associated host” from the regulated area to prevent artificial spread of the pest to non-infested areas to protect California's agricultural industry and the environment.

DISCLOSURES REGARDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Department has made the following initial determinations:

Mandate on local agencies and school districts: None.

Cost or savings to any state agency: None

Cost to any local agency or school district which must be reimbursed in accordance with Government Code sections 17500 through 17630: None and no nondiscretionary costs or savings to local agencies or school districts.

Cost or savings in federal funding to the state: None.

Significant, statewide adverse economic impact directly affecting business, including the ability of California businesses to compete with businesses in other states: None.

Cost impacts on a representative private person or business: The Department is not aware of any costs a representative person or business would incur in reasonable compliance with the proposed action.

Small Business Determination

The Department has determined that the proposed regulations may affect small business.

Significant effect on housing costs: None.

Results of the Economic Analysis

Amendment of these regulations will not:

- (1) Create or eliminate jobs within California;
- (2) Create new businesses or eliminate existing businesses within California; or
- (3) Affect the expansion of businesses currently doing business within California

This amendment is for an existing on-going program. The Department believes this amendment of the regulation benefits public safety by preventing additional hazardous trees in uninfested areas, worker safety by preventing firefighters (local, State and

federal) and arborists from being exposed to hazardous trees which are more prone to unpredictable branch and trunk failures due to the SOD pathogen. The Department is not aware of any specific benefits to the health of California residents. The Department believes the amendment of this regulation benefits the welfare and economic well-being of California residents by reducing fire hazards and hazardous breaking trees; and, protecting property values, heritage trees, cultural traditions, forests, and local, State and national parks, wildlife and the environment from artificial spread of the SOD pathogen through this new associated host.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The Department must determine that no reasonable alternative it considered to the regulation or that has otherwise been identified and brought to its attention would either be more effective in carrying out the purpose for which the action is proposed or would be as effective and less burdensome to affected private persons or would be more cost-effective to affected private persons and equally effective in implementing the statutory policy or other provision of law than the proposal described in this Notice.

AUTHORITY

The Department proposes to amend subsection 3700(c) pursuant to the authority vested by Sections 407, 5301, 5302 and 5322 of the Food and Agricultural Code.

REFERENCE

The Department proposes this action to implement, interpret and make specific Sections 5301, 5302 and 5322 of the Food and Agricultural Code.

CONTACT

The agency officer to whom written comments and inquiries about the initial statement of reasons, proposed actions, location of the rulemaking files, and request for a public hearing may be directed to is: Stephen S. Brown, Department of Food and Agriculture, Plant Health and Pest Prevention Services, 1220 N Street, Room 210, Sacramento, California 95814, (916) 654-1017, FAX (916) 654-1018, E-mail: sbrown@cdfa.ca.gov. In his absence, you may contact Lindsay Rains at (916) 654-1017. Questions regarding the substance of the proposed regulation should be directed to Stephen S. Brown.

INTERNET ACCESS

The Department has posted the information regarding this proposed regulatory action on its Internet Web site (www.cdfa.ca.gov/plant/Regulations.html).

AVAILABILITY OF STATEMENT OF REASONS AND TEXT OF PROPOSED REGULATIONS

The Department of Food and Agriculture has prepared an initial statement of reasons for the proposed actions, has available all the information upon which its proposal is based, and has available the express terms of the proposed action. A copy of the initial statement of reasons and the proposed regulations in underline and strikeout form may be obtained upon request. The location of the information on which the proposal is based may also be obtained upon request. In addition, when completed, the final

statement of reasons will be available upon request. Requests should be directed to the contact named herein.

If the regulations adopted by the Department differ from, but are sufficiently related to the action proposed, they will be available to the public for at least 15 days prior to the date of adoption. Any person interested may obtain a copy of said regulations prior to the date of adoption by contacting the agency officer (contact) named herein.

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