

Brown declares emergency for dying trees

By David Siders, Sacramento Bee

Lamenting “the worst epidemic of tree mortality” in the state’s modern history, Gov. Jerry Brown on Friday sought federal aid to remove dead trees from California forests and called for more controlled burns to reduce the risk of wildfire.

The declaration, including a controversial exemption from environmental reviews, comes amid California’s ongoing drought and a bark beetle infestation that has killed millions of trees weakened by lack of water.

Brown said the die-off exacerbates the risk of wildfires and the threat of erosion. He ordered state agencies to remove dead or dying trees from high-hazard areas and said his administration will work with federal authorities to expand controlled burns.

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