This document explains my rationale and the regulatory basis for implementing Forest Order 05-15-51-22-23, hereby closing lands, roads and trails within the Sierra National Forest as a result of the Oak Fire’s threat to public safety. This Forest Order will be effective from September 3, 2022, through September 16, 2022. I will consider terminating this Order early if conditions change. This Order supersedes Forest Order No. 05-15-51-22-21.

On the afternoon of July 22, 2022, a wildfire ignited near the community of Midpines, CA. Currently, the Oak Fire is burning at 19,244 acres and 98% containment. The Fire’s behavior has consisted of flanking, backing, and creeping through National Forest Systems lands, roads, and recreational areas. Although the Oak Fire is near full containment, hazards remain in the Fire’s burn scar. Significant snags (weakened dead standing trees), hot spots and soft stump holes remain, posing a risk to public safety. For the above reasons, the Oak Fire closure will remain in effect. Administrator’s however have decided to scale the Oak Fire Closure closer to the burn scar, opening significant access to Forest recreation in non-burned areas.

Exhibits A-C will identify the closure area and closed roads impacted by the Oak Fire. These closures will be enforced with signs and/or barricades and monitored by law enforcement personnel. Other seasonally designated roads and trails available and open for public use will be accessible in accordance with the Sierra National Forest Motor Vehicle Use Map.

This Forest Order includes an exemption for persons with a Forest Permit for Use of Roads, Trails, or Areas Restricted by Regulation or Order (Form FS-7700-48). Authorization under this exemption will only be provided if I or my delegate determine that the risk to personal health and safety is reasonable considering the circumstances of the request. We may also require appropriate personal protective equipment and other necessary safety measures.

Scoping regarding this temporary closure involved discussions with multiple local, state, and federal agency cooperators. I have concluded that this decision may be categorically excluded from documentation in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) under the National Environmental Policy Act. This action falls within the category identified in 36 C.F.R. § 220.6(d)(l) – prohibitions to provide short-term resource protection or to protect public health and safety – and does not require documentation in a decision memo, decision notice, or record of decision. I have determined that there are no extraordinary circumstances associated with this temporary closure. Implementation of the decision may begin immediately.