



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES
OF CALIFORNIA

August 23, 2018

The Honorable Bill Dodd
Co-Chair, Wildfire Preparedness &
Response Legislative Conference
Committee
State Capitol, Room 5064
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Chris Holden
Co-Chair, Wildfire Preparedness &
Response Legislative Conference
Committee
State Capitol, Room 5132
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Wildfire Preparedness & Response Legislative Conference Committee

Dear Senator Dodd and Assembly Member Holden:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), we would like to convey strong encouragement for the Committee to move forward with wildfire prevention actions now. RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

RCRC member counties continue to suffer from devastating, high severity wildfires this fire season, with the Mendocino Complex Fire, Ferguson Fire, Carr Fire and Donnell Fire constituting some of the largest, most destructive wildfires in the history of California. Bear in mind these fires have taken place very early in the 2018 fire season, and we can expect to see more destruction from wildfire before the year's end. Our counties and the communities therein have been advocating for enhanced fuels treatment, along with increased pace and scale of forest and vegetation management, for several years to help prevent such wildfires across the State. Now, wildfire risk has spread to larger areas of the California as the wildland urban interface spreads over larger areas of the State due to the relative inaction on our fuels load combined with climate change and the lingering impacts of the recent five-year drought.

While years of both climate science and forestry science point to better forest management as a solution for many of the carbon emissions and wildfire prevention issues California has identified that need to be addressed, including much of the science in all of California's previous Climate Change Assessments, we have still not satisfactorily implemented a rigorous forest and vegetation management program to bring our wildlands to a healthy, resilient, wildfire-resistant condition. RCRC submitted a number of recommendations to the Committee on August 7, 2018 that we believe would,

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combined with the efforts of Senate Bill 1260 (Jackson), move the State's forests in a more resilient direction in the coming years. We firmly believe that a combination of fuels reduction, increased wood products utilization, watershed restoration, and increased pace and scale of vegetation management is the only way to truly implement a long-term, landscape-scale plan for the health of California's forests.

RCRC recognizes the work of the Senate Bill 901 Conference Committee and appreciates setting aside the inverse condemnation discussion to focus on real solutions to California's wildfire problem, and we believe the time is now for the Committee to act. Legislative action will impact future wildfires provided we implement real solutions that will help prevent further loss of lives, destruction of property, impairment of our State's water quality and supply, and profound emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants. California cannot afford to delay these important actions for another year.

We urge the Committee to move forward with wildfire prevention actions now and appreciate your consideration of our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org if you have any questions or would like to discuss further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton", with a stylized flourish at the end.

STACI HEATON
Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor, State of California
Diana Dooley, Chief of Staff, Office of Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.
Members of the Wildfire Preparedness & Response Legislative Conference
Committee