



April 27, 2021

The Honorable John Laird
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 4040
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 456 – SUPPORT
As Amended April 19, 2021**

Dear Senator Laird:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for your Senate Bill 456, which require the Governor's Forest Management Task Force (Task Force) to develop an implementation strategy for the "Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan" (Plan) released in January 2021 and to report annually on the state's progress in achieving the goals set forth in the Plan. RCRC is pleased to sponsor this bill as an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

RCRC member counties contain much of California's forested lands, including more than 70 percent of the State's national forest lands. While rural communities have historically borne the majority of destruction caused by high severity wildfires, wildfire risk has now become a statewide public safety concern as the wildland urban interface spreads over larger areas of the State due to climate change and impacts of renewed drought conditions in California. Wildfires are also a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and compromise the quality and quantity of much of the State's water supply. The health and resilience of our forests and wildlands impacts every Californian.

California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, released in 2018, estimated a 78 percent increase in acreage burned in California by wildfire by the end of the century.¹ However, the state's record-breaking 2020 wildfire season already produced that level of increase over the course of a few years. Recent fires also resulted in some of the worst air quality in the world for Northern California residents, with studies showing that up to

¹ Governor's Office of Planning and Research, et al. (2018) California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment. Retrieved from https://www.energy.ca.gov/sites/default/files/2019-11/Statewide_Reports-SUM-CCCA4-2018-013_Statewide_Summary_Report_ADA.pdf

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half of all small-particle air pollution in the Western U.S. resulting from wildfire smoke in recent years.²

In January 2021, the Task Force released the Plan to set goals for the treatment of California's forests to prevent high severity wildfires, restore forest resilience, improve watershed health, and restore forests and wildlands already damaged by the numerous catastrophic wildfire events that have occurred in the past decade. The Plan is the result of several years of careful collaboration and includes vegetation management and fuels treatment strategies such as prescribed fire, mechanical thinning and woody biomass utilization, all of which have been widely scientifically recognized to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with high severity wildfires. RCRC was a proud participant in the activities to develop the Plan and believes that the goals, targets, and strategies are vital to the future of the resilience of California's forests and wildlands. However, without a statutorily mandated implementation strategy, the Plan could easily become another meaningless document whose goals are never fully realized much like the California Forest Carbon Plan, and others.

By requiring the Task Force to develop and annually report on an implementation strategy for the Plan, SB 456 lends accountability to the Plan that wouldn't otherwise exist. This accountability could mean the difference between a fully realized implementation of the Plan and another strategy document that is simply never carried out.

For these reasons, RCRC supports your SB 456. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



STACI HEATON
Acting Vice President Governmental Affairs

cc: Members of the Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee
Consultant, Senate Natural Resources & Water Committee

² M. Burke, et al. "The changing risk and burden of wildfire in the United States." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, January 12, 2021.



May 3, 2021

The Honorable Anthony Portantino
Member, California State Senate
State Capitol, Room 5050
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 456 (Laird) – SUPPORT
As Amended April 19, 2021**

Dear Senator Portantino:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 456, authored by Senator John Laird, which require the Governor's Forest Management Task Force (Task Force) to develop an implementation strategy for the "Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan" (Plan) released in January 2021 and to report annually on the state's progress in achieving the goals set forth in the Plan. RCRC is pleased to sponsor this bill as an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

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In January 2021, the Task Force released the Plan to set goals for the treatment of California's forests to prevent high severity wildfires, restore forest resilience, improve watershed health, and restore forests and wildlands already damaged by the numerous catastrophic wildfire events that have occurred in the past decade. The Plan is the result of several years of careful collaboration and includes vegetation management and fuels treatment strategies such as prescribed fire, mechanical thinning and woody biomass utilization, all of which have been widely scientifically recognized to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with high severity wildfires. RCRC was a proud participant in the activities to develop the Plan and believes that the goals, targets, and strategies are vital to the future of the resilience of California's forests and wildlands. However, without a statutorily mandated implementation strategy, the Plan could easily become another meaningless document whose goals are never fully realized much like the California Forest Carbon Plan, and others.

By requiring the Task Force to develop and annually report on an implementation strategy for the Plan, SB 456 lends accountability to the Plan that wouldn't otherwise exist. This accountability could mean the difference between a fully realized implementation of the Plan and another strategy document that is simply never carried out.

For these reasons, RCRC respectfully requests your 'Aye' vote when this measure is heard before your Committee. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



STACI HEATON
Acting Vice President Governmental Affairs

cc: The Honorable John Laird, Member of the State Senate
Members of the Senate Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Senate Appropriations Committee

² M. Burke, et al. "The changing risk and burden of wildfire in the United States." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, January 12, 2021.



June 22, 2021

The Honorable Luz M. Rivas
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
State Capitol, Room 3126
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 456 (Laird) – SUPPORT
As Amended May 20, 2021**

Dear Assembly Member Rivas:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 456, authored by Senator John Laird, which require the Governor’s Forest Management Task Force (Task Force) to develop an implementation strategy for the “Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan” (Plan) released in January 2021 and to report annually on the state’s progress in achieving the goals set forth in the Plan. RCRC is pleased to sponsor this bill as an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

RCRC member counties contain much of California’s forested lands, including more than 70 percent of the State’s national forest lands. While rural communities have historically borne the majority of destruction caused by high severity wildfires, wildfire risk has now become a statewide public safety concern as the wildland urban interface spreads over larger areas of the State due to climate change and impacts of renewed drought conditions in California. Wildfires are also a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and compromise the quality and quantity of much of the State’s water supply. The health and resilience of our forests and wildlands impacts every Californian.

California’s Fourth Climate Change Assessment, released in 2018, estimated a 78 percent increase in acreage burned in California by wildfire by the end of the century.¹ However, the state’s record-breaking 2020 wildfire season already produced that level of increase over the course of a few years. Recent fires also resulted in some of the worst air quality in the world for Northern California residents, with studies showing that up to

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half of all small-particle air pollution in the Western U.S. resulting from wildfire smoke in recent years.²

In January 2021, the Task Force released the Plan to set goals for the treatment of California's forests to prevent high severity wildfires, restore forest resilience, improve watershed health, and restore forests and wildlands already damaged by the numerous catastrophic wildfire events that have occurred in the past decade. The Plan is the result of several years of careful collaboration and includes vegetation management and fuels treatment strategies such as prescribed fire, mechanical thinning and woody biomass utilization, all of which have been widely scientifically recognized to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with high severity wildfires. RCRC was a proud participant in the activities to develop the Plan and believes that the goals, targets, and strategies are vital to the future of the resilience of California's forests and wildlands. However, without a statutorily mandated implementation strategy, the Plan could easily become another meaningless document whose goals are never fully realized much like the California Forest Carbon Plan, and others.

By requiring the Task Force to develop and annually report on an implementation strategy for the Plan, SB 456 lends accountability to the Plan that wouldn't otherwise exist. This accountability could mean the difference between a fully realized implementation of the Plan and another strategy document that is simply never carried out.

For these reasons, RCRC respectfully requests your 'Aye' vote when this measure is heard before your Committee. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at sheaton@rcrcnet.org or (916) 447-4806.

Sincerely,



STACI HEATON
Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: The Honorable John Laird, Member of the State Senate
Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee

² M. Burke, et al. "The changing risk and burden of wildfire in the United States." Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, January 12, 2021.



July 15, 2021

The Honorable Lorena Gonzalez
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee
State Capitol, Room 2114
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 456 (Laird) – SUPPORT
As Amended July 12, 2021**

Dear Assembly Member Gonzalez:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express our support for Senate Bill 456, authored by Senator John Laird, which require the Governor’s Forest Management Task Force (Task Force) to develop an implementation strategy for the “Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan” (Plan) released in January 2021 and to report annually on the state’s progress in achieving the goals set forth in the Plan. SB 456 would also rename the Task Force as the Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each member county.

RCRC member counties contain much of California’s forested lands, including more than 70 percent of the State’s national forest lands. While rural communities have historically borne the majority of destruction caused by high severity wildfires, wildfire risk has now become a statewide public safety concern as the wildland urban interface spreads over larger areas of the State due to climate change and impacts of renewed drought conditions in California. Wildfires are also a significant source of greenhouse gas emissions and compromise the quality and quantity of much of the State’s water supply. The health and resilience of our forests and wildlands impacts every Californian.

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air quality in the world for Northern California residents, with studies showing that up to half of all small-particle air pollution in the Western U.S. resulting from wildfire smoke in recent years.²

In January 2021, the Task Force released the Plan to set goals for the treatment of California's forests to prevent high severity wildfires, restore forest resilience, improve watershed health, and restore forests and wildlands already damaged by the numerous catastrophic wildfire events that have occurred in the past decade. The Plan is the result of several years of careful collaboration and includes vegetation management and fuels treatment strategies such as prescribed fire, mechanical thinning and woody biomass utilization, all of which have been widely scientifically recognized to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with high severity wildfires. RCRC was a proud participant in the activities to develop the Plan and believes that the goals, targets, and strategies are vital to the future of the resilience of California's forests and wildlands. However, without a statutorily mandated implementation strategy, the Plan could easily become another meaningless document whose goals are never fully realized much like the California Forest Carbon Plan, and others.

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STACI HEATON

Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: The Honorable John Laird, Member of the State Senate
Members of the Assembly Appropriations Committee
Consultant, Assembly Appropriations Committee

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