



September 21, 2020

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Member, United States Senate  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: S. 4625 - The National Prescribed Fire Act of 2020 - SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Wyden:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to offer our support for your S. 4625, the National Prescribed Fire Act of 2020. RCRC has continually advocated for a commonsense approach toward reducing the effects and severity of wildfires that have plagued California over the past decade. This bill would work to accomplish this objective by actively increasing the pace and scale of prescribed fire on federal, state, tribal and private lands through a variety of programs, funding allocations, workforce training and environmental review flexibility, creating more resilient forests. RCRC is an association of thirty-seven rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from those member counties.

California has encountered unprecedented wildfire activity over the past decade. RCRC member counties, which contain more than 70 percent of the State's forested lands, have historically suffered the vast majority of these fires. Currently, California is in the throes of its most destructive wildfire activity in the state's history, largely caused by lightning strikes igniting dry, overly dense, improperly managed lands of various jurisdictions. These lands could have benefited greatly and, in fact, likely would have burned much less severely had they previously been treated through a rigorous program of prescribed fire.

S. 4625 will help states like California get ahead of our egregious backlog of untreated and undertreated wildland vegetation, particularly in areas where mechanical thinning simply is not an option. By offering funding and training to advance the scale of prescribed burns, along with providing necessary flexibility for air quality management agencies to allow for increased prescribed fire, states with severe forest management needs like California can begin the process of increasing the pace and scale of prescribed burning in concert with other fuels treatment projects. This necessary step will not only

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decrease the resources and effort spent on fire suppression in the long run, but will ultimately save lives and communities while improving watersheds, wildlife habitat, and contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from catastrophic wildfires.

RCRC is pleased to lend its support to the National Prescribed Fire Act of 2020 as a means to address California's continued need to increase pace and scale of wildfire prevention, recognizing the important part prescribed fire plays in the treatment of vegetated lands. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [sheaton@rcrcnet.org](mailto:sheaton@rcrcnet.org).

Sincerely,

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

STACI HEATON  
Senior Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Member of the U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Kamala Harris, Member of the U.S. Senate