

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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June 21, 2022

The Honorable Toni Atkins
President Pro Tem
California State Senate
Swing Space, Room 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Senate Budget Committee
Swing Space, Room 8630
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski
Chair, Senate Budget Sub #2
Swing Space, Room 6530
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The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker
California State Assembly
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The Honorable Phil Ting
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee
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Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Chair, Assembly Budget Sub 3
Swing Space, Room 8130
Sacramento, CA 95814

I am writing to express the support of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors for the Governor's Trailer Bill Language proposal on [Forest Health CEQA and NEPA Streamlining \(as updated 05/31/2022\)](#), and we encourage you to adopt and support this proposal as part of the [2022-2023 budget package](#).

El Dorado County's diverse landscapes include a portion of the Tahoe Basin located on the east of the Sierra Nevada Crest, which has unique governance and ecological sensitivities. The vast West Slope foothill area (West Slope) located to the west of the Sierra Nevada Crest in El Dorado County has urbanized areas in the west near Sacramento County, while the majority of the West Slope has a rural-agricultural setting, which for many is a preferred way of life.

Since the late 2000s with the Angora Fire in the Lake Tahoe Basin (where over 200 homes were lost), El Dorado County has recognized the significance of wildfire threats to its residents, infrastructure, and water and recreation resources. In 2021, El Dorado County was even more greatly impacted by, and is now struggling to recover from, the even more devastating Caldor Fire. Both catastrophic wildfires originated on federally managed lands where fuels and forest management programs are slow to be implemented due to overlapping federal National Environmental Policy Act and California Environmental Quality Act regulations.

Fifty percent of El Dorado County consists of federally managed lands. Fuels and forest management programs on federal lands require compliance with NEPA and other federal laws, but because additional California State agencies have permitting authority on federal lands (e.g., State Water Resources Control Board or California Department of Fish and Wildlife), CEQA requirements must also be satisfied, requiring additional years of unneeded environmental and public review processes.

Streamlining and expediting forest fuels management projects on federal lands are critical to reducing and avoiding future Angora Fire and Caldor Fire impacts to residences in the County. These projects are of benefit to the County by improving water quality and supply, protecting County roads and recreation and water supply infrastructure, and reducing the human economic and health impacts associated with catastrophic fires.

El Dorado County supports the need for this CEQA exemption to eliminate the redundant and time-consuming CEQA environmental review process associated with fuels management programs on federally administered lands in the County. Fuels management programs in the headwater regions on US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands are consistent with the policies, goals and objectives of existing County plans including the El Dorado Water Agency's Water Resources Development and Management Plan. Timely implementation of scientifically sound forest management practices on the upper watershed federally managed lands is critical to ecosystem health; the recreation economy; water quality and supply; water infrastructure protection; and overall watershed functions.

We want to thank the Governor and Resources Secretary Wade Crowfoot for bringing forward this much-needed proposal. We believe it will expedite the management and treatment of lands in our county, to help recover from the Caldor Fire and hopefully prevent a similar fire of this magnitude from ever happening again in our County.

Sincerely,

Lori Parlin
Chair, Board of Supervisors

c: Secretary Wade Crowfoot, California Natural Resources Agency