

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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SUZANNE ALLEN DE SANCHEZ
Clerk of the Board



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April 14, 2009

**The Honorable Nancy Skinner
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N Street, Room #164
Sacramento, California 95814**

SUBJECT: Support for Assembly Bill 1066 (Mendoza)

Dear Chair Skinner:

The Board of Supervisors for the County of El Dorado voted Tuesday, April 14, 2009, to support Assembly Bill 1066 and urges your committee to approve the measure. This bill is a simple mechanism to help the economically weakened forest products industry in California during critically difficult times. This bill would not result in any adverse changes to the environment, and would spread timber harvesting and associated activities over a longer time period than current law allows.

The forest products industry in California has been significantly downsized in recent years due to the state's complex regulatory structure, weak lumber markets and competitive factors. Overall, over 80 sawmills have closed since 1989. Recently, Sierra Pacific Industries announced that it will close its mill in El Dorado County – laying off 164 employees. As a result of these mill closures, Californians now import 75% to 80% of the wood products that are consumed here.

Large landowners in California are required to plan their forest growth and harvests for the next 100 years. In addition, harvesting can not occur until the state has approved permits which contain measures to protect the environment. However, current law limits these permits (Timber Harvest Plans) to just three years, with the possibility for two one-year extensions when work has commenced, but is not completed. This relatively short time period concentrates timber harvests, and does not allow timber owners the flexibility to take advantage of stronger markets when they occur. Assembly Bill 1066 would increase the term to 10 years.

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

Support for Assembly Bill 1066

Page 2

Lumber markets are cyclical. This bill would help to partially offset the increasing costs of production faced by landowners in California by providing a greater opportunity to take advantage of stronger lumber markets, making them more competitive with other producers. The result would be a reduced reliance on imports and, when the economy turns around, an opportunity for El Dorado County's forest products industry to return its operations and jobs to our county.

We urge you to join us in supporting AB 1066.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Ron Briggs, Chair
El Dorado County

For Supervisors:

John Knight, District I

Ray Nutting, District II

Jack Sweeney, District III

Norma Santiago, District V

cc: The Honorable Tony Mendoza
Assembly Natural Resources Committee Members
Governor's Office Legislative Unit
David Titus, CDF