



RESOLUTION NO. 206-2008
OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF EL DORADO

**REQUEST FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION TO PROVIDE FIRE PREVENTION AND
MAINTENANCE WORK ON CALIFORNIA'S
FEDERAL WILD AND FOREST LANDS**

WHEREAS, catastrophic wildfires continue to threaten lives, property and the natural resources of the state of California; and,

WHEREAS, the insurance losses for the 2007 Fire Season in Southern California were \$1.6 billion and the Angora Fire in the Tahoe basin was more than \$150 million alone; insurers have paid out in excess of \$8 billion to thousands of policy holders from the top 10 California wildfires since 1970; and,

WHEREAS, the estimated loss of employment from the 2007 Southern California fires was in excess of \$500 million; and,

WHEREAS, California is approximately 50% publicly owned land and 50% privately owned land but many rural counties have substantially higher percentages of federally owned land; and,

WHEREAS, El Dorado County has over 536,000 acres of federally owned land, which is approximately 57% of the total land in the county; and,

WHEREAS, California has over 43 million acres of federal land, much of which has not been adequately managed to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire; and,

WHEREAS, two of the three largest wildfires in California in the past 100 years began on federally-owned land; and,

WHEREAS, many acres of dead and decaying trees remain in the national forests within El Dorado County due to lax forestry management practices on federal lands; and,

WHEREAS, millions of dollars are spent each year fighting fires in our national forests; and,

WHEREAS, the escalating costs of fighting fires on federal land over the last 10 years has significantly diminished the available resources for the critically needed prevention measures that can minimize these catastrophic fires; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Interior have spent over \$1 billion on fire suppression every year since 2000 with suppression costs now consuming over 50% of the total wildland fire budget, as compared to 13% of the total fire budget in 1991, leaving few resources for critically needed preventive maintenance of our national forests in the west and throughout the country; and,

WHEREAS, the resources to manage the federal lands to reduce fire risk would be a small investment relative to the skyrocketing costs of fire suppression; and,

WHEREAS, the State of California has made significant strides towards reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires on state and private lands such as ranking lands as to the level of fire hazard, requiring 100 feet of defensible space around homes, requiring ignition-resistant materials on all new construction that is built in any Fire Hazard Severity Zone within State Responsibility Areas, any Local Agency Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, or any designated Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Area, and many other things to not only address preservation of life and property but the environmental risks of large scale wildfire as well; and,

WHEREAS, the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires in El Dorado County will result in harmful secondary environmental effects, including diminished air and water quality, impacted watershed, increased air pollutant emissions, and threatened habitats of sensitive wildlife species; and,

WHEREAS, approximately eighty percent of the State's developed surface water supply originates on watershed lands within our rural counties. California's residents use a portion of this water for domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other beneficial uses and these rivers, lakes, and watershed lands also serve as habitat for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife; and,

WHEREAS, the detrimental effects on these watersheds affect all of California, not just rural California; and,

WHEREAS, the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires significantly impacts the levels of greenhouse gases in El Dorado County; and,

WHEREAS, research and modeling have revealed that in 2007 during the Angora Fire in El Dorado County, the total Wildfire Greenhouse Gas emissions were 143,129 metric tons, this is equivalent to adding 28,166 passenger vehicles to the road per year; and,

WHEREAS, the mitigation of wildfire emissions is vital to reach the goals stated in the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32-Nunez, Chapter 488, Statutes of 2006); and,

WHEREAS, the Draft AB 32 Scoping Plan, released in June 2008, fails to adequately address the need to mitigate wildfires and the importance of quantifying and modeling wildfire emissions on private, state, and federal lands; and,

WHEREAS, there continues to be a widely recognized extremely high risk of catastrophic wildfires in El Dorado County due to unnaturally heavy fuel loads and the early drying of wild land vegetation; and,

WHEREAS, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors calls for immediate measures to be taken to prevent imminent catastrophic wildfires; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors declares that there is an ongoing emergency due to the threat of wildfire in California, that the state and the local governments have taken many steps to resolve this issue and now requests that the Governor take an active role at the federal level to demand that the United States Forest Service take action in California's federal wild and forest lands to do the prevention and maintenance work required to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of El Dorado at a regular meeting of said Board, held the 29th day of July, 2008, by the following vote of said Board:

Attest:
Cindy Keck
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
by

Ayes:
Noes:
Absent:

Deputy Clerk

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

I certify that the foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.
Date:

Attest: Cindy Keck, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of the County of El Dorado, State of California

By _____
Deputy Clerk