



RESOLUTION NO. 157-2014

OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF EL DORADO

**Declaring a Continued State of Emergency Due to  
Extreme Drought, Imminent Threat from Catastrophic Fires and Degraded Forest Conditions**

**WHEREAS**, it is the responsibility, and within the scope of authority, of the Board of Supervisors to exercise powers necessary to promote and protect the public safety, health, welfare and prosperity of all people within El Dorado County; and

**WHEREAS**, catastrophic wildfires continue to threaten lives, property, and the natural resources of this county and throughout the State of California; and

**WHEREAS**, the threat of catastrophic fire is no longer limited to a season but is an ongoing threat throughout the year due to the multi-year drought, increasing fire suppression costs, and diminished funding for fire prevention projects; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States Forest Service and Department of Interior have spent over \$1 billion on fire suppression every year since 2000 with suppression costs now consuming more than 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**, catastrophic wildfires in El Dorado County have resulted in harmful environmental damage, including compromised air and water quality, watershed degradation, increased air pollutant emissions, and threatened habitats of sensitive wildlife species; and

**WHEREAS**, roughly 50% of the land in El Dorado County is federally managed land and 80% of the state's developed surface water supply originates on watershed lands within our rural counties like the American River watershed, affecting all of California, not just rural California; and

**WHEREAS**, the management of public lands, particularly regarding fire protection and fuel reduction, on national forest system lands under the jurisdiction of the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and Department of the Interior is wholly inadequate and has long-been ignored, placing El Dorado County in significant peril and at greater risk of future catastrophic wildfires; and

**WHEREAS**, these conditions are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment, and facilities of El Dorado County; and

**WHEREAS**, the irretrievable loss of productive forest lands for generations evidenced by the loss of goods and services originating from the public lands impacted by the catastrophic wildfire; the insurance losses from catastrophic wildfire; the loss of valuable natural resources; the damage and/or loss of public and private property; and, the long-term devastation of the local economy imperil the well-being of local residents, the State of California, and, ultimately the economy and people of this nation; and

**WHEREAS**, the resources that could be made available to manage the federal lands to significantly reduce fire risk would be a small investment relative to the skyrocketing costs of fire suppression;

**WHEREAS**, proper thinning of the forested lands in El Dorado County, home to the South Fork of the American River watershed, could increase water yield and improve water quality; and

**WHEREAS**, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution 156-2014 on September 17, 2014, declaring a local state of emergency in response to the King Fire; and

**WHEREAS**, a Gubernatorial Declaration of a State of Emergency was subsequently made on September 17, 2014 for El Dorado County and Siskiyou County due to wildfires;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors declares that there is an ongoing emergency due to the actual and future threat of catastrophic wildfires and directs designated staff to work closely with the El Dorado National Forest, US Forest Service, and the Department of the Interior on a cohesive strategy that incorporates a collaborative and coordinated approach and process for managing the forests in El Dorado County, and, while state and local governments have taken many steps to resolve this issue, now strongly urges the Governor to take an active role at the federal level to demand that the United States Forest Service, Department of the Interior, and all federal land management agencies take action on California's federal lands to proactively address prevention and maintenance work required to mitigate the ongoing and increasing risk of catastrophic wildfires.

**BE IT FURTHER DECLARED** that the Governor of California is requested to seek a Presidential concurrence regarding the critical conditions in California, providing the highest possible priority and recognition of the extreme danger being encountered by providing a comprehensive and coordinated strategy directed by the federal government, in cooperation with the state and local government.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of El Dorado at a regular meeting of said Board, held the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September, 2014, by the following vote of said Board:

Attest:  
James S. Mitrisin  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors

Ayes:  
Noes:  
Absent:

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Norma Santiago, Chair, Board of Supervisors