

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5390
(530) 622-3645 Fax

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May 17, 2022

The Honorable Anna Caballero
Member, California State Senate
1021 O Street, Room 7620
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Senate Bill 1109 – Support
As Amended March 14, 2022**

Dear Senator Caballero:

On behalf of the County of El Dorado, I write in support of Senate Bill 1109, a bill that helps achieve the state's forest health and wildfire risk reduction goals by increasing the generating capacity of biomass projects to 225 MW, extending existing biomass contracts by 5 years, and mandating biomass procurement for certain Community Choice Aggregators (CCA) and publicly owned electric utilities.

Senate Bill 1109 helps achieve the state's forest health and wildfire risk reduction goals by increasing the productive use of forest waste for biomass energy generation. In particular, SB 1109 seeks to increase the amount of electricity electrical corporations must procure from biomass facilities from 125 to 225 megawatts (MW) under the state's Bioenergy Renewable Auction Mechanism (BioRAM) program. Importantly, SB 1109 extends existing contracts for a handful of key biomass energy facilities (which are integral for local wildfire mitigation projects) for an additional five years. SB 1109 also seeks to reduce pollution from biomass energy facilities by requiring facilities with longer term contracts to meet emission limits equivalent to what would be achieved through best available retrofit control technology. Finally, SB 1109 provides greater flexibility for fuel procurement requirements for those biomass facilities.

Biomass energy and wood products manufacturing are vital tools in the state's forest health improvement and wildfire risk reduction toolbox. California is finally making progress on long-overdue forest health improvement and wildfire risk reduction projects, but there has never been a greater need to increase the pace and scale of those projects. In 2020, California's wildfires burned over 4 million acres and released over 90 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Another 2.5 million acres burned last year. Emissions from wildfires undercut much of the state's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and result in widespread hazardous air quality for extended periods of time. Biomass facilities provide an outlet to get residuals out

of the forest, where they are often left to both decompose naturally (and remain fuel for future fires) or be piled and burned.

SB 1109 also helps improve local energy resiliency and overall grid reliability. Bioenergy provides firm baseload renewable power to offset the intermittent nature of both solar and wind. These facilities are also often located in areas of the state that have seen a sharp decline in local energy reliability over the last several years, so increasing local production could complement efforts to deploy microgrids in rural areas.

Finally, by increasing biomass energy production, SB 1109 will create jobs and improve local economies in areas of the state with higher levels of unemployment and in great need of the types of good-paying jobs associated with these facilities.

For the reasons stated above, the County of El Dorado is pleased to support SB 1109 as currently written. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Lori Parlin, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of El Dorado

cc: Members, Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Communications
Nidia Bautista, Chief Consultant, Senate Committee on Energy, Utilities, and Communications
Kerry Yoshida, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus
Senator Brian Dahle
Senator Jim Nielsen
Assemblyman James Gallagher
Assemblyman Frank Bigelow
Assemblyman Kevin Kiley
Assemblywoman Megan Dahle

