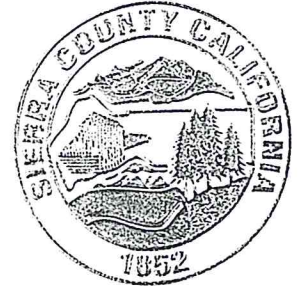


SIERRA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors
P.O. Drawer D
Downieville, California 95936
Telephone (530) 289-3295
Fax (530) 289-2830

RECEIVED
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
EL DORADO COUNTY

2014 JUL 29 AM 10:57



COPY SENT TO BOARD MEMBERS
FOR THEIR INFORMATION

DATE 7-29-14

July 23, 2014

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667

Dear Chairman and Members of the Board:

The Sierra County Board of Supervisors has initiated an effort to engage the twenty two (22) counties of California that encompass the land area of the Sierra Nevada regarding fire severity and fire fuels/biomass conditions and recommended actions to develop and implement an action plan to mitigate ongoing and increasing fire severity conditions. We are requesting the immediate action by your Board of Supervisors in support of this campaign and ask that you give this your highest priority.

This campaign, adopted and initiated by the Sierra County Board of Supervisors on July 22, 2014, includes two very important resolutions-one being a proclamation of a state of local emergency throughout Sierra County and the second being a resolution requesting that all twenty-two counties adopt a similar resolution and proclamation for their respective county by August 15, 2014. These two actions will be the beginning of a campaign to develop a long-term and sustainable program to reduce wild land fire severity conditions on public and private lands.

I have attached the background report that was prepared for the actions taken by the Sierra County Board of Supervisors on July 22, 2014 and have also included the two adopted resolutions referenced in the opening paragraphs of this communication. Please review the background report as it describes the very fabric of our frustration with existing conditions and also provides greater detail in the approach and coordination to be expected following the actions being requested of your county.

We look forward to commencing a productive, effective, and sustainable program that is understandably of the highest priority to each of our counties and the actions requested of your county will be the beginning of what we hope to be a coordinated and successful effort.

Please send a copy of your adopted resolution to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Rural County Representatives of California, and California State Association of Counties. Please also forward a copy of your adopted resolution to the Clerk of the Sierra County

Board of Supervisors (PO Drawer D, Downieville, California, 95936 or email to HFoster@sierracounty.ca.gov) so we may track the progress of this effort between now and August 15. If you have questions or concerns, you may also reach me by email at sproen@aol.com or by calling 209-479-2770.

Thank you for your anticipated support of this effort and we look forward to organizing a most worthwhile program.

Sincerely,

Sierra County
Board of Supervisors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. Roen', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Roen
Chairman of the Board

CC: Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Rural County Representatives of California
California State Association of Counties

BACKGROUND REPORT

WILD LAND FIRE SEVERITY

**Sierra County Board of Supervisors
Staff Background for Action Item
July 22, 2014 Meeting**

Agenda Item: A) Discussion regarding fire severity and fire fuels/biomass conditions throughout Sierra County and recommended actions to develop and implement an action plan to mitigate ongoing and increasing fire severity conditions and to begin an aggressive process for prevention of natural fuels and woody-biomass build up, catastrophic wildfire, and the continued condition of a lack of required fire protection investments in the County. B) Adopt resolution proclaiming a state of local emergency consisting of extreme fire severity conditions and natural fuel build up and accumulation. C) Adoption of resolution directing staff to proceed with an action plan to engage the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), California State Association of Counties (CSAC), the Governor of California and appurtenant State Natural Resource and policy agencies, and every California County located within the boundary of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy

Background: The Board of Supervisors has continuously availed itself of opportunities to comment and at times, actively participate in programs and with organizations that have proposed to seek solutions with federal and state agencies over the issues of forest health, declining forest conditions, woody-biomass build up, fire severity and risk, and fire safe planning programs. The Board of Supervisors has consistently expressed that its highest priority in the County is improving forest health and reducing fire severity within the forest regions of the County. Examples of such involvement taken up by the Board of Supervisors includes participation in the Quincy-Library Group (QLG), in the Sustainable Forest Action Coalition (SFAC), comments to USDA on the Forest Service Planning Rule (DEIS), comments to and direct participation in the Forest Service roundtable workshops, meetings with the Regional Forester of Region 5, and support for legislation at the Federal and State level responding to wildfire protection needs. Every effort by the County to identify issues and seek satisfactory solutions, whether on its own or in coordination with other counties or regional associations, have produced results that have been consistently unsatisfactory.

This County, more so than most California counties, is acutely aware of the need for proactive and effective communication with the Federal government since seventy per cent of its land base is publicly owned and under the management and direction of the United States Forest Service, United States Bureau of Land Management, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Land management plans exist for these three primary land management agencies yet budget reductions, excessive regulatory burdens, and failure to implement methodologies to reduce the potential for catastrophic wildfire have all but paralyzed and stymied these agencies from any measurable progress. The status quo allows dire existing conditions to worsen and the risk for catastrophic fire events sits in the forefront within Sierra County and every county within the Sierra Nevada. Communications alone cannot produce the results that are required to create a

fire-safe environment. An aggressive and comprehensive program focused on creating a sustainable, safe, and productive forest health condition is urgently needed. It is these very counties and their respective forest communities that promote and carry out resource management activities and projects producing timber resources, agricultural products, clean air, mineral production, clean and abundant supplies of water, recreational opportunities, fishery and wildlife habitat, and so many other resources for the general public and the vastly increasing number of recreational visitors to these areas.

Sierra County has experienced a significant loss of social and economic infrastructure that is directly related to the reduction or cessation of programs and the inability of the Forest Service to deliver an effective and sustainable level of goods and services under current policy, direction, and budget. The loss of industry in the region, the loss of employment, and the spiraling social and economic impacts resulting from these conditions are devastating. These catastrophic wildfires cause an irretrievable loss of productive forest lands for generations and the loss of resource value forecloses on access to sawlogs, biomass, and goods and services that would have been derived from the burned landscape. These burned lands contain significant resource value including but not limited to watershed, water quality, wildlife and fishery, and recreation. This long-term loss of resource infrastructure significantly undermines community and regional stability. Sierra County alone in the recent past has lost thousands of productive acres through losses caused by the Crystal Peak, Cap, Indian, Treasure, Bassetts, Harding, Hirschdale, and Cottonwood fires. Equally devastating and what is approaching a region-wide condition characterized as “the perfect storm” is the paralysis that has developed in forest health management, fuels reduction, biomass removal, and wildfire prevention that has now been coupled with the most volatile and dangerous conditions imaginable for catastrophic wildfire.

Science and experience clearly indicates that future fires will be larger and more dangerous to people, resources, and other forms of life unless thinning proceeds on a pace and scale commensurate with this problem. The Regional Forester has for years outlined a goal of treating 500,000 acres annually statewide for ecological restoration by timber harvest, mechanical treatment, and biomass removal projects and has committed to increasing the pace and scale of such treatments to begin a sustainable program of reducing fuel loading and the severity of wildfire conditions. This goal and commitment has failed. Conditions worsen and ironically, a large annual volume of treated national forest acres comes off of salvage sales and restoration from previously forested lands now located within the boundaries of an extinguished and catastrophic wildfire. The recent Rim fire being just one of many examples of a self-fulfilling prophecy-fail to conduct fuel reduction treatments, ignore worsening conditions, observe a catastrophic wildfire obliterate thousands of acres of previously productive forest land, and then claim to approach the pace and scale outlined by the Regional Forester by harvesting the burned lands that were ignored from the outset.

Likewise, science indicates that the present forests are extremely over-dense and are unlikely to survive climate change and the impacts it will bring to the Sierra Nevada. A warmer climate could significantly increase the risk of uncharacteristic and destructive

wildfires and increase the susceptibility of forests to large-scale insect and disease epidemics. Climate change increases both the magnitude of the effort needed to restore and maintain forest health and the urgency of taking actions. Many species of plants and wildlife are threatened and endangered due to the combination of increased forest density and catastrophic wildfires.

Evaluate the facts and figures pertaining to the Rim fire which started in August 2013 and not extinguished until October 2013. Here we have the most devastating fire in recorded history for the Sierra Nevada and the third largest wildfire of record in California. Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties lost 257,000 acres or 400 square miles of productive timber land and valuable acreage within Yosemite National Park. There was (and still is) a record drought, a heat wave, a total lack of fuel reduction and attention to forest health and the Rim fire grew to 100,000 acres in just four days. It burned the back country areas of Yosemite National Park, a global attraction and national treasure. It threatened the water supply for the 2.9 million users from the City and County of San Francisco. Hetch-Hetchy Reservoir and three powerhouses were shut down impacting the entire power grid for the San Francisco Bay area. The fire burned so hot in vast areas that it killed a significant percentage of plant and animal life in its path and left a sterilized soil condition and landscape that will take generations to regenerate. The State of California expended \$127 million to fight this catastrophic wildfire.

Federal air quality standards and the resultant regulatory framework significantly hampers the number of acres that can be treated by controlled burn on Federal lands annually. The cited air quality impacts associated with controlled burns pale in comparison to the air quality impacts and pollutants that are dispersed into the atmosphere by wildland fires. It is imperative that revisions to the regulations and some form of configuration be implemented that allows the continued use of controlled burns as a method of forest treatment removing biomass and significant build up of natural fire fuels.

We have reached a point in the Sierra Nevada comparable to the threats to Lake Tahoe that were addressed in July of 1997 by the "Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum". Here President Clinton and Vice President Gore, after a series of workshops had identified issues and constraints, issued Executive Order 13057 establishing a formal "federal interagency partnership" charged with assuring coordination and efficient management of federal programs and projects and required a memorandum of agreement with the States of California and Nevada to facilitate financial resources to the region.

California, is experiencing the driest year in recorded State history and as a result, the conditions in Sierra County and the Sierra Nevada are categorized at a most dangerous and perilous level. The Governor of California in his January 17, 2014 declaration of drought emergency and his subsequent executive order has not advanced a proactive nor sustainable effort or program to coordinate programs and develop a long term strategy assessing and acting on the devastating potential for catastrophic wildfire.

Therefore, the Board of Supervisors continues to maintain as its highest priority, the reduction of fire fuels and the need to aggressively implement a sustainable program to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire by removing fuels and biomass from the public and private forested areas of the County and therefore it is imperative that immediate action be initiated to engage the twenty two counties of California that comprise the Sierra Nevada. This coordinated approach must be recognized by the appropriate Federal and State representatives and agencies, the twenty two counties, the twelve national forests, and agencies and organizations throughout the United States that the Sierra Nevada is a national treasure that is at peril in the absence of a proactive program to reduce fire hazard severity.

Recommendation:

- 1) Adopt a resolution proclaiming a local state of emergency in Sierra County based on fire severity conditions and buildup of fuels and biomass throughout the County and seek the concurrence of the Governor of California.
- 2) Adopt a second resolution directing staff to organize and implement communication with the twenty two counties of California that comprise the Sierra Nevada and request that each County adopt a similar resolution. Direction would also be given to coordinate and request the immediate and strong support and involvement of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and California State Association of Counties (CSAC) transmitting a consistent and strong message to the Federal and State agencies.
- 3) The resolution proclaiming a local state of emergency within the County should request that the Governor seek concurrence of the President of the United States over the Sierra Nevada-wide declaration of local emergency, asking for a process to be immediately implemented for the Sierra Nevada which emulates the “presidential forum” created for Lake Tahoe in 1997.
- 4) The second resolution should specify the multiple year funding needs and the specific topical areas that need to be addressed including but not limited to Sierra Nevada-wide forest condition assessments, restoration projects, modeling and monitoring to enhance decision making, forest thinning, biomass reduction, projects aimed at fire suppression improvements and infrastructure modifications to address fire response, wildland-urban interface (WUI) and project planning funds, and related uses.
- 5) The second resolution should set forth a structure for implementation of the “Sierra Nevada Presidential Forum” that requires a memorandum of agreement between the Secretary of Agriculture/Secretary of Interior and the State Secretary for Resources and through this memorandum, place the Sierra Nevada Conservancy in a prominent role for coordination and administration of this program. This organization is in place to provide strategic direction for the Sierra Nevada guided by four adopted areas of focus: healthy forests, preservation of ranches and agricultural land, watershed protection and restoration, and promotion of sustainable tourism and recreation. The Conservancy is properly postured to successfully implement this long-term program as it represents the

twenty two California Counties which comprise the Sierra Nevada and is responsible through program development and funding for 25 million acres or 25% of California's land area. The area served by the Conservancy contains areas of regional, statewide, national, and global significance including Yosemite Park, Sequoia Park, Kings Canyon Park, Lassen Volcanic Park, the Modoc Plateau, Owens Valley, Mono Basin, the Sierra Nevada Range, Mount Shasta, Mammoth Lakes and June Lake Loop, Lake Oroville, and numerous other treasures. This region contains thirty one watersheds, twelve (12) national forests, 600,000 residents, provides two thirds of California's water, and accommodates fifty million recreational visits per year.

The region clearly parallels the significance of Lake Tahoe and has never been more at risk. The status quo is unacceptable.

ADOPTED RESOLUTIONS

WILD LAND FIRE SEVERITY

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SIERRA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL EMERGENCY
COUNTY OF SIERRA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

RESOLUTION 2014- 066

WHEREAS, County Ordinance 403 and Sierra County Code, Section 8.16.010 and following empowers the County Director of Emergency Services to request that the Board of Supervisors proclaim the existence or threatened existence of a local emergency when the County is affected or likely to be affected by a public calamity; and,

WHEREAS, the County Director of Emergency Services and the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sierra do hereby find that conditions of extreme peril to the safety of persons, property and public infrastructure have arisen affecting the communities of the County, the national forest system lands within the County, and the private timber and agricultural lands within the County caused by the uncontrolled build-up of natural fire fuels, posing a severe and ongoing threat of catastrophic wildfire in the County and in California; and,

WHEREAS, the management of 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 is wholly inadequate, has long-been ignored, and is significantly under funded, placing Sierra County in significant peril and at great risk in the event that catastrophic wildfires occur in thereby destroying public resources, private property, businesses, and the natural environment; 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 catastrophic wildfire; the insurance losses from catastrophic wildfires; the loss of valuable natural resources; the damage and/or loss of public and private property; the long-term devastation to local economies; the long-term negative impacts on the livelihood of local residents; and, the significant expenditure of public funding resulting from fire suppression efforts as well as infrastructure and resource restoration has risen to a critical point that demands an effective response and cooperative strategy among all levels of government to identify, plan, fund, and implement an effective public land fire protection strategy plan which includes planning, assessments, fuels reduction, and enhanced fire suppression and emergency response; and,

WHEREAS, these potential conditions are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of Sierra County and the Federal and State agencies having fire suppression jurisdiction within the County and immediate region and the physical and fiscal impacts to the County of Sierra will be severe including but not limited to public utilities, public services, protection of property, emergency medical response, public schools, transportation, and the direct and indirect threats to business, lives, and property; and,

WHEREAS, the threat of wild land fire continues to be the highest priority assigned under the "Sierra County Hazard Mitigation Plan" developed in conformance with the

FEMA program entitled "Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA)" program and this proclamation is made at a time when fuel conditions are extreme and all evidence clearly suggests that Sierra County is in peril and the County, including the "Sierra Nevada region" has never been more at risk with no relief in progress; and,

WHEREAS, the Governor of California declared a drought emergency for the entire State on January 17, 2014, and this declaration was based on the actual occurrence of the driest year on record in California, and while water-related actions have been initiated, no measurable strategy for long term and sustainable wild land fire-severity reduction appears eminent within Sierra County and within the boundaries of the Sierra Nevada as defined by the official boundaries of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, a California State Agency, (which includes Sierra County and twenty one (21) other California counties) and hereinafter referred to as "Sierra Nevada region" and there exists no complementary action by Federal agencies to assess and react to the severity and perilous conditions facing the "Sierra Nevada region" related to catastrophic wildfire so therefore this proclamation implements a condition above and well beyond the scope of the January 2014 State drought-declaration of emergency; and,

WHEREAS, during the existence of said local emergency, the powers, functions, and duties of the Sierra County Office of Emergency Services shall be those prescribed by State law-Government Code 8630, Sierra County ordinances, and Sierra County resolutions and the County Director of Emergency Services shall proceed with formal notification to the State Office of Emergency Services, State legislative representatives, and the Governor of California with a request that he proclaim the County of Sierra to be in a state of emergency.

THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY OF SIERRA HEREBY PROCLAIMS AND DECLARES a local state of emergency based upon the foregoing findings as there exists, extreme conditions of peril to the safety of persons, private property, national forest system lands, valuable watersheds, and public infrastructure within the County of Sierra.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that the individual counties comprising the "Sierra Nevada region" as defined herein being situated within the boundary of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy are urged to evaluate the risk and peril experienced within each individual county and determine if such a proclamation of local emergency is warranted and appropriate.

BE IT FURTHER DECLARED that the Governor of California is requested to confirm a state of emergency and seek a Presidential concurrence regarding the existing conditions in Sierra County and the "Sierra Nevada region", providing the highest possible priority and recognition of the extreme peril being encountered by providing a comprehensive and coordinated strategy directed by the Federal government, in cooperation with State and local government, which emulates the former and successful "Lake Tahoe Presidential Forum" for the deteriorating natural conditions impacting the Lake Tahoe region and conducted in 1997, providing a plan, tasking agencies with specific direction, providing long-term funding, establishing a streamlined process for project delivery directed towards a long-term and sustainable reduction of fire hazard and fuel loading to protect public and private resources as well as the lives and property of Sierra County citizens and the public.

Adopted on the 22nd day of July, 2014 by the following vote:

AYES: Supervisors..Huebner, Beard, Schlefstein, Roen

NOES: None

ABSENT: Supervisor..Adams

ABSTAIN: None

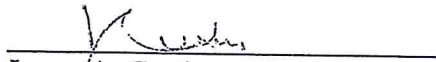
COUNTY OF SIERRA



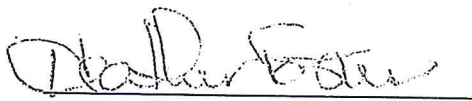
Paul Roen

Chairman, Board of Supervisors

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


James A. Curtis
County Counsel

ATTEST:


Heather Foster
Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF SIERRA, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

**IN THE MATTER OF IMPLEMENTING A PROCLAMATION OF LOCAL
EMERGENCY THROUGHOUT THE SIERRA NEVADA REGION OF
CALIFORNIA AND REQUESTING SUPPORT OF THE BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS OF THE TWENTY TWO COUNTIES OF CALIFORNIA
COMPRISING THE SIERRA NEVADA**

RESOLUTION 2014- 067

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Sierra County adopted on July 22, 2014 a proclamation of local emergency based upon fire severity conditions and build up of fire fuels and biomass that places residents, public and private lands, and vast resources in great peril from losses due to catastrophic wildfire; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors desires to organize a common recognition by all twenty two counties of California which comprise the land area of the Sierra Nevada of the severe threats to this region by catastrophic wildfire and requesting immediate response by State and Federal agencies to provide and fund a long-term and sustainable strategy for the Sierra Nevada including forest condition assessments, modeling and monitoring to enhance planning and decision making, forest health and restoration projects, and fire suppression improvements and infrastructure modifications to address fire preparations and response; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors and the “common recognition by all twenty two counties of California” seeks the strong support and concurrence by the Governor of California, asking that the President of the United States concur with the proclamation of emergency and further requests a process or strategy be implemented immediately for the Sierra Nevada, emulating the “presidential forum” conducted, funded, and implemented for Lake Tahoe in 1997.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Sierra County Board of Supervisors strongly urges the Board of Supervisors of the twenty two counties of California comprising the Sierra Nevada to adopt a resolution containing similar, if not exact, language and content of the resolution adopted by the Sierra County Board of Supervisors, proclaiming a local state of emergency in their respective county no later than August 15, 2014 and direct an official copy of said declaration to the Governor of California, to their respective State and Federal legislative representatives, to the California State Association of Counties (CSAC), to the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), and to the Executive Director of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC).

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the twenty two counties, in the adoption of its proclamation of local emergency, request that the Governor of California seek the concurrence of the President of the United States for an

immediate effort and strategy for the Sierra Nevada which emulates the "presidential forum" created for Lake Tahoe in 1997.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the twenty two counties, strongly convey its recommendation that the Sierra Nevada Conservancy be assigned a most prominent role in the organization, administration, and implementation of a long-term, sustainable program for the protection of the Sierra Nevada through programs and projects designed to reduce the severity of impacts to public and private lands from catastrophic wildfires.

ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Sierra on the 22nd day of July 2014, by the following vote:

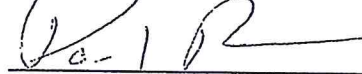
AYES: Supervisors Huebner, Beard, Schlefstein, Roen

NOES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Supervisor Adams

COUNTY OF SIERRA



PAUL ROEN

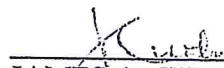
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



HEATHER FOSTER
CLERK OF THE BOARD



JAMES A. CURTIS
COUNTY COUNSEL