



Public Comment #17
County of El Dorado Clerk of the Board <edc.cob@edcgov.us>
BOS Recd. 4-14-22

Agenda Item 17, Letter in Opposition to HR 6903

El Dorado CNPS <web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com>

Thu, Apr 14, 2022 at 1:49 PM

To: BOSfour@edcgov.us

Cc: bosthree@edcgov.us, edc.cob@edcgov.us

Supervisor Lori Parlin,

Attached is a letter of opposition to the proposal for the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter of support for Congressman McClintock's proposed legislation, HR 6903 (Agenda Item 17 in the April 19 agenda). As explained in the attached letter, the El Dorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society feels that decisions for fighting wildfires should be made by those professionals on the ground at the time of the wildfire.

Thank you very much for your consideration and we hope that the Board decides NOT to submit a letter of support for this legislation.

Alice Cantelow
President, El Dorado Chapter, CNPS

 **Letter of Opposition to HR 6903.pdf**
107K



CALIFORNIA
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

El Dorado Chapter, CNPS

April 13, 2022

Supervisor Lori Parlin,
Chair El Dorado County Board of Supervisors
330 Fair Lane Placerville, CA 95667

RE: April 19th Agenda Item 17 (22-0502) Restricting the Forest Services' (and other federal partners) ability to manage wildfires for multiple resource benefits where appropriate on federal land.

Dear Chair Parlin,

The El Dorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (EDC-CNPS) would like to voice our **opposition** to legislation (HR 6903) brought before the Board of Supervisors during the April 5, 2022 meeting and request that the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors **NOT** send a letter of support for this legislation.

The proposed bill would direct the United States Forest Service to immediately suppress wildfires on national forest system lands and eliminates the use of fire for resource purposes except in prescribed fires.

While this legislation may appear helpful at this time of repeated, large catastrophic wildfires, it is not appropriate to legislate firefighting in this way. Rather we feel that firefighting planning and implementation is best left up to the fire managers that are on the ground at the time of the fire. The call to stop all wildfires in the first 24 hours is part of how we got to the current situation in the first place. We need to use fire, along with other management tools, to bring the Forests back to a more natural and fire resilient condition. This is not to say that the Forest Service or other firefighting agencies should or do let all fires burn, but rather they use all of the best information available to make reasoned decisions at the time. The Forest Service applies guidelines to identify situations where the use of "managed" fire is safe, environmentally beneficial, and can be appropriately managed with the available resources. Wildfire by definition is "wild" and highly unpredictable. The Caldor Fire is an excellent example of a wildfire that was attacked aggressively from the beginning and yet still was not contained for some time. Last summer the Forest Service Chief halted managed fires when the available firefighting resources were limited - a good example of applying guidelines and leaving the firefighting up to the professionals rather than politicians.

At times, it may appear that a wildfire is not being attacked aggressively, but firefighter safety is a key concern and often limits the ability to fight a wildfire.

The point in the proposed legislation to suppress prescribed fires that exceed prescriptions is appropriate, but legislation is not needed for this since it is already the Agency's practice. What is needed to support effective forest management is the establishment and funding of a "prescribed fire workforce" so that the Agency isn't drawing from the same pool of expertise and skill for wildfires and prescribed fire. Prescribed fire is one of the key tools to help us get forests more fire resilient. As the wildfire season gets longer, the availability of qualified firefighters and planners gets limited.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Agenda Item. Again, we ask that you **NOT** approve sending a letter of support for this proposed legislation. It is critical that we let professional firefighting agencies and land managers do their job to move our Forests to a more fire-resilient condition.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alice Cantelow". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

ALICE CANTELOW
President,
El Dorado Chapter, California Native Plant Society