

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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The Honorable Chris Holden
Chair, Assembly Committee on Appropriations
Legislative Office Building
1021 O Street, Suite 8220
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 338 (Aguiar-Curry) – OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Holden:

El Dorado County is opposed to Assembly Bill 338, authored by Assembly Member Cecilia Aguiar-Curry. If approved, AB 338 would expand the definition of “public works” to include fuel reduction work paid for in part or whole by public funds, thereby requiring payment of prevailing wage.

Hazardous fuels reduction and wildfire mitigation work in El Dorado County is performed primarily by private contractors. The imposition of prevailing wage would increase costs associated with this work and significantly hinder the effectiveness and speed at which we are creating and maintaining fire adapted communities. Approval of this bill would directly result in fewer acres treated annually. Projects will take longer to complete, as additional funding would be necessary, and in some cases, projects might not be implemented because sufficient funds are not available.

This bill would have a direct negative impact on our local fire safe council’s ability to deliver defensible space and fuel reduction work to our senior, disabled, and veteran communities who rely on local contractors to perform chipping and defensible space work. The increased cost will mean that fewer homes will be assessed and treated, and more flammable vegetation will remain. In addition, many of the contractors who are implementing our projects are local, small businesses, who may not have the capacity to work through the complexities of the state's prevailing-wage system and may be unable to bid on these projects.

AB 338 stands in direct opposition to the Governor's strategic goal of treating one million acres by 2025, as AB 1717 did last year. It is reasonable to assume this is the reason the Governor vetoed AB 1717 at the end of last September. It will also obstruct the USDA, Forest Service's 10- Year strategy to confront the wildfire crisis and limit the ability of the six landscapes in California designated under that strategy to receive significant federal investments.

In the last two years, El Dorado County has experienced some of the most devastating fires in its recorded history, including the Caldor and Mosquito fires, which destroyed over 1,000 homes and hundreds of thousands of acres of forestland. This is a time when we need to be increasing our efforts to mitigate the risk of wildfire across the landscape, however, this bill would only hamper those efforts.

El Dorado County opposes AB 338 and respectfully requests your "No" vote when the measure comes before your committee. Please do not hesitate to contact our Deputy Chief Administrative Officer, Sue Hennike, at sue.hennike@edcgov.us, to further discuss our concerns.

Sincerely,

Wendy Thomas, Chair
El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

c.c.: Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry, Author