

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

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May 3, 2016

The Honorable Mike Morrell
State Capitol, Room 3056
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT SENATE BILL 1136 (Morrell)

Dear Senator Morrell,

On behalf of El Dorado County, I am pleased to report that our board has decided to support SB 1136, which will change the annual reporting requirements for the Fire Prevention Fee. Current law requires the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to report to the Legislature by each January 31st on the status and uses of the funds. SB 1136 would extend the reporting requirement from 2017 to 2021. The bill would also require the report to include detailed information on each program, subprogram and element for which CAL FIRE uses revenue generated from the Fire Prevention Fee.

When the "fee" was first imposed, supporters including the Governor and legislators, admitted the new levy would not add additional funds to fire suppression services; rather, CAL FIRE's administrative costs would transfer from the General Fund to rural homeowners. In the five years since the fee's inception, it has become apparent that the annual reporting requirements are too vague. CAL FIRE currently lists most of its spending of the Fire Prevention Fee under a category entitled "fire prevention." According to CAL FIRE, this includes education, fire engineering, defensible space inspections and law enforcement, among other things. The listing of all spending under one category prohibits the public from receiving a clear breakdown of how their fee is being spent.

For these reasons, El Dorado County is supporting SB 1136. However, the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors encourages the senator and the legislature to repeal the Fire Prevention Fee.

Sincerely,

Chairman, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors

cc:

Members, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors