

California Legislature



FRANK BIGELOW
Assembly Member, 5th District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kirk Kimmelshue

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(916) 319-

Assemblyman Bigelow & Senator Berryhill Introduce Fire Prevention Fee Accountability Bill

Sacramento – Assembly Member Frank Bigelow, R-O'Neals and Senator Tom Berryhill, R-Twain Harte introduced AB 211 to require an annual report be submitted to the legislature, which itemizes each expenditure report on the State Responsibility Area Fire Prevention Fee.

"The taxpayers in State Responsibility Areas have a right to know where their hard earned money is going. While I continue to oppose this tax on rural residents, these tax dollars are intended to be spent to mitigate the threat of catastrophic fire throughout California. There is no way to know if these dollars are being spent effectively, and it is the Legislature's duty to ensure accountability," said Bigelow.

"Some of California's most devastating fires have occurred right in my backyard since the state started collecting the State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Prevention Fee. I opposed the fee when it was going through the Legislature but it unfortunately still exists. If taxpayers in SRA areas are forced to pay a fee for fire prevention, I want to ensure every nickel collected is used to protect them from catastrophic wildfires...not just swallowed up in the bureaucracy," added Berryhill. "AB 211 is one way to hold the state accountable."

The State Responsibility Area (SRA) Fire Prevention Fee became law in 2011. The fee is a \$150 annual charge on each habitable structure on a parcel that is within a State Responsibility Area.

Currently, the annual report to the Legislature on vague expenditures has expired. AB 211 will ensure the Legislature receives an annual report indefinitely on the expenditures of the State Responsibility Fire Prevention Fee.

“Cal Fire firefighters have done a tremendous job on the front lines of our State’s most catastrophic fires. These brave men and women work tirelessly on a variety of important fire prevention services throughout California to reduce fire fuels that lessen risk of wildfire to communities and evacuation routes. To ensure these heroes have all the resources they need, it is imperative that this money is spent effectively and efficiently,” Bigelow added.

Assemblyman Frank Bigelow, R-O’Neals, is a lifelong rancher who represents the 5th Assembly District in the California Legislature, which includes all or parts of Placer, El Dorado, Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, Tuolumne, Mariposa, Madera and Mono counties.

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