

May 17, 2022

The Honorable Cecilia Aguiar-Curry
Member, California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Room 6350
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Assembly Bill 2878 – Support

Dear Assembly Member Aguiar-Curry:

On behalf of the County of El Dorado, I write in support of Assembly Bill 2878, a bill that helps achieve the state's forest health and wildfire risk reduction goals by increasing the productive use of forest waste.

Assembly Bill 2878 helps achieve the state's forest health and wildfire risk reduction goals by increasing the productive use of forest waste through energy generation and wood products manufacturing. In doing so, AB 2878 will: 1) help reduce future emissions related to the open burning or natural decomposition of forest residuals; 2) increase energy reliability and resiliency in those communities at greatest risk of losing power; and, 3) create jobs and improve the economy in many of California's rural communities.

California is finally making progress on long-overdue forest health improvement and wildfire risk reduction projects, but there has never been a greater need to increase the pace and scale of those projects. In 2020, California's wildfires burned over 4 million acres and released over 90 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions. Another 2.5 million acres burned last year. Emissions from wildfires undercut much of the state's progress in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and result in widespread hazardous air quality for extended periods of time.

Biomass energy generation plays a key role in the state's forest health and wildfire risk reduction efforts since traditional methods of disposal (open burning and natural decomposition) produce far greater emissions than would occur in a biomass facility. Residuals left in place for natural decomposition add to the fuel load and are increasingly likely to be consumed in a wildfire. A recent field study indicates that biomass energy generation results in 98-99 percent lower PM2.5, carbon monoxide, methane, and black carbon emissions compared to open pile burning (along

with a significant reduction in NOx and carbon dioxide equivalent greenhouse gas emissions).¹ Similarly, many recent state reports have called for an increase in innovative wood products manufacturing to sequester carbon and put unmarketable forest residual to productive use. AB 2878 recognizes these needs and seeks to promote bioenergy production and wood products manufacturing.

AB 2878 also helps improve local energy resiliency and overall grid reliability. These are very important goals, as electrical reliability has plummeted dramatically for many rural communities. AB 2878 seeks to address these problems by:

- Promoting use of forest biomass to support rural microgrids.
- Requiring utilities to upgrade infrastructure in forested regions to reduce wildfire risk and support integration of bioenergy.
- Incentivizing interconnection of bioenergy projects.
- Extending the state's BioMAT program until 2030, which requires utilities to procure electricity from small bioenergy projects, including biomass facilities that use fuels from high hazard zones.

For the reasons stated above, the County of El Dorado is pleased to support AB 2878 as currently written. Thank you for your leadership on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Lori Parlin, Chair
Board of Supervisors
County of El Dorado

cc: Members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Members of the Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee
Senator Brian Dahle
Senator Jim Nielsen
Assemblyman James Gallagher
Assemblyman Frank Bigelow
Assemblyman Kevin Kiley
Assemblywoman Megan Dahle

¹ Springsteen B, Christofk T, York R, Mason T, Baker S, Lincoln E, Hartsough B, Yoshioka T. 2015. "Forest biomass diversion in the Sierra Nevada: Energy, economics and emissions." *Calif Agr* 69(3):142-149.
<https://doi.org/10.3733/ca.v069n03p142>.

