



Legislation Text

File #: 23-0632, **Version:** 1

Chief Administrative Office recommending the Board consider the following regarding proposed State legislation:

- 1) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign a letter of support for SB 488 (Alvarado-Gil) regarding bioenergy projects and Community Choice Aggregators; and
- 2) Approve and authorize the Chair to sign a letter of opposition to AB 338 (Aguiar-Curry) regarding prevailing wage requirements for fuel reduction work.

FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION / BACKGROUND

These two pieces of proposed legislation were brought to our attention by other Counties, and after researching the bills and their anticipated impacts, the Chief Administrative Office recommends the Board take positions on each bill as outlined below.

SB 488 - Alvarado-Gil: SUPPORT

If approved, this Bill would provide more opportunity for Community Choice Aggregators like Pioneer Energy to acquire bioenergy. This would support existing biomass-to-energy facilities by providing additional purchasers for the energy they produce. Supporting biomass facilities is beneficial for El Dorado County beyond just the energy benefits. The ancillary benefits of biomass include providing a necessary outlet for forest waste that would otherwise increase the risks of devastating wildfires. The biomass industry also provides jobs that are critical in rural communities and enhances economic development.

AB 338 - Aguiar-Curry: OPPOSE

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. The imposition of prevailing wage on fuel reduction projects 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 councils' 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.

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. The Regional Council of Rural Counties (RCRC) also opposes this bill.

ALTERNATIVES

The Board could choose to wait and take positions on these bills later, or to take no position at all.

PRIOR BOARD ACTION

N/A

OTHER DEPARTMENT / AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPACT

N/A

CLERK OF THE BOARD FOLLOW UP ACTIONS

Provide signed copies of the letters to the Chief Administrative Office for distribution

STRATEGIC PLAN COMPONENT

Healthy Communities; Economic Development

CONTACT

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