



SINCE 1917



FOREST PRODUCTS INDUSTRY NATIONAL LABOR MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

1231 "I" STREET, SUITE 206 SACRAMENTO, CA 95814



Forest Landowners OF CALIFORNIA



March 13, 2017



The Honorable Cristina Garcia  
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
State Capitol Room, 2013  
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: **AB 425 (Caballero). Timber Harvesting Plans: Exemptions.** (As introduced on February 9, 2017)

**NOTICE OF SUPPORT**

The undersigned organizations strongly support AB 425, which seeks to expand upon the existing Forest Fire Prevention Pilot Program by allowing for the construction of up to 600 feet of temporary roads for the purposes of treating and thinning overstocked forests in need of management. The pilot program itself allows for the forests to be thinned without the need of a Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) and instead provides for a ministerial permit with CAL FIRE required to ensure all of the California Forest Practice Rules are followed.

AB 425 would allow for broader application of the program, which we believe is consistent with existing law that already allows for the construction of roads up to 600 feet as a minor deviation to a THP with notification to CAL FIRE, not requiring approval by a state agency. In addition, approved guidelines from the Tree Mortality Task Force on tree removal also allow for the construction of roads of up to 600 feet without the need for approval under a THP.

Last year, AB 2029 (Dahle, Chapter 563, Statutes of 2016) was enacted, extending the sunset date of the pilot program, expanding the diameter of trees that could be harvested by two inches, and authorizing entire counties with land in the Sierra Nevada Conservancy boundaries to participate in the program rather than only the portion of the county within the boundaries. The bill also contained the provision allowing for temporary construction of roads up to 600 feet as long as the slope was 40% or less. The bill passed without a single "no" vote in the Assembly with all these provisions; however, CAL FIRE opposed the roads' provisions without additional safeguards. Unfortunately, it was too late in the session to address these concerns and the roads' provisions were stricken from the bill in the Senate Appropriations Committee. AB 425 seeks to resolve the concerns expressed by CAL FIRE by providing additional protections and restrictions that were not in AB 2029 so that the construction of temporary roads can be used without negative impacts to forest resources.

The Governor announced an Emergency Proclamation on October 30, 2015 due to the severe drought conditions and epidemic infestations of native bark beetles resulting in vast tree mortality in several regions of the state. While this pilot program is effective, its use is limited because of the inability to access overly dense tree stands. Only 11 Forest Fire Prevention Pilot project exemptions occurred in 2015 covering 1,594 acres. In 2016, there were 21 projects covering 2,065 acres.

With an estimated 102 million dead trees in California, this legislation is a small, but necessary step to a healthier forest. AB 425 will allow for needed thinning of trees from overstocked, drought ridden and disease infected forests. The result will be well-stocked, healthy forests of the biggest, tallest and strongest trees retained that are more resilient to catastrophic fire and insect attack. This bill is a reasonable solution meant to address a growing crisis as described in the Governor's emergency proclamation.

Sincerely,



Kirstin Kolpitcke, Vice-President Legislative Affairs  
Calforests



Justin Oldfield, Vice President Government Relations  
California Cattlemen's Association



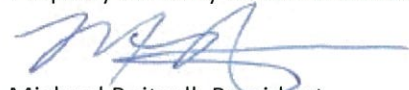
Valerie Nera, Policy Advocate  
California Chamber of Commerce



Jay Fazio, President  
California Licensed Foresters Association



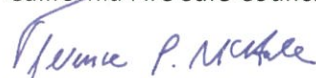
Armand Feliciano, ACIC Vice President  
Property Casualty Insurers Association of America



Michael Reitzell, President  
California Ski Industry Association



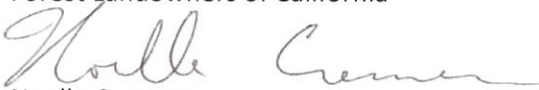
Jerry Davies, Chairman and CFSC Board of Directors  
California Fire Safe Council



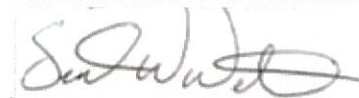
Terry McHale, Legislative Advocate  
CAL FIRE Local 2882



Charll Stoneman, President  
Forest Landowners of California



Noelle Cremers  
California Farm Bureau Federation



Scott Wetch, Legislative Advocate Forest Products  
Products Industry Nat'l Labor Management Comm.



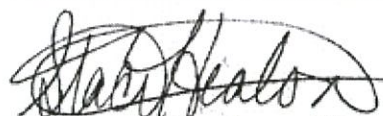
Cara Martinson, Legislative Representative  
California State Association of Counties



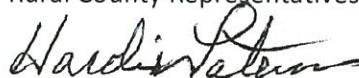
Katherine Pettibone, Vice-President State Affairs  
American Insurance Association



Kara Cross, General Counsel  
Personal Insurance Federation of California



Staci Heaton, Regulatory Affairs Advocate  
Rural County Representatives of California



Hardie Tatum, President  
Associated California Loggers

cc: Members, Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
Michael Jarred, Senior Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
John Kennedy, Assembly Republican Caucus