

April 1, 2003

Assembly Member Patty Berg  
State Capitol  
Room 2137  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1168

Dear Assembly Member Berg,

The California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) represents over 700 foresters in the state of California. We have been closely following the above referenced bill sponsored by you. We have a few concerns regarding the language in the bill which we feel would negatively affect forest management operations in these watersheds.

It appears this bill was submitted as an act to thwart the proposed activities involving the removal of substantial amounts of water from the Albion and Gualala River watersheds for Southern California. CLFA understands why there is reason to be concerned regarding such an activity in watersheds which support listed species of fish and other animals. However, the application to remove this water has been withdrawn. It is likely the proponent saw the vast amount of public criticism coming his way and decided against it. It is also very unlikely that he would have been successful anyway because of strict regulations protecting listed species and the number of agencies which would review, and most likely deny, such an application. Therefore, the issue for which this bill was written appears to be moot at this time.

If the bill continues forward, it will negatively affect sound forest management in the area of these watersheds. Small, temporary water diversions are part of forest management activities to water road surfaces during log hauling operations. This keeps road prisms firm and compact, resulting in little to no erosion and loss of sediments which travel downslope to streams, including the Gualala and Albion Rivers. These temporary diversions are scrutinized very carefully by the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). They require a Streambed Alteration Agreement from DFG and many times require a water drafting plan. This limits the amount of water taken to ensure aquatic habitats are not significantly impacted. This bill could limit or discontinue the use of minor amounts of water for forest management activities in these watersheds.

In addition to the water drafting issue is the fact that under this legislation, authority will be granted to the Secretary of Resources to impose additional land use restrictions on adjacent, upslope lands. Current Forest Practice Rules already severely limit timber harvesting adjacent to these rivers and, as such, they are sufficiently protected from significant environmental effects related to forest management.

I can speak first hand as to the adequacy of the current Forest Practice Rules and their effects on the Albion River, having been an Area Manager for my company in this drainage in the recent past. Because of the existing protections, areas adjacent to the Albion River enjoy a thick canopy of

mature redwood and Douglas fir, which provides needed shade and slope stability adjacent to this important fisheries habitat.

The current regulations are working. There is no need to increase restrictions adjacent to these rivers. CLFA urges you to consider how this bill would impact the activities of our membership. We work in a state which has some of the strictest environmental regulations in the country, and the world for that matter. The loss of sustainable forest management in this state because of increased regulation would only support logging in areas where significant impacts to environmental resources would be greater.

Please consider removing this bill for these reasons as well as the fact that the proposal for removal of such a large amount of water in these watersheds for domestic use has been withdrawn and would most likely not make it through the review of multiple agencies with concerns regarding such a project.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,

John Andersen  
Director, CLFA Board

Cc: Aris Evia, Consultant to the Assembly Natural Resources Committee.

