



CALIFORNIA
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FORESTERS
ASSOCIATION

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March 31, 2003

The Honorable Doug LaMalfa
California State Assembly
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Reference: AB 344
CLFA Position: Support

Dear Mr. LaMalfa,

The California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) strongly supports your AB 344. This bill would create a modest, carefully targeted exemption in existing forest practice rules, facilitating the treatment of flammable woody fuels that are located on private lands within wildland/urban interface zones as identified by the U.S. Forest Service.

Numerous studies and extensive firefighting experience underscore the fact that forest fires are most destructive when flammable fuels are dense and arrayed in such a manner as to facilitate the ability of a surface fire to climb into the forest canopy and spread as a devastating crown fire. By treating such fuels in advance, management efforts can lower the future risk of a potentially catastrophic wildfire. In the event of a fire, emergency suppression efforts within previously treated forest stands are more effective and much safer. This translates into lower costs to taxpayers, as well as less property and environmental damage on the ground.

AB 344 will allow landowners within the qualifying zones to undertake forest thinning projects at a reduced regulatory cost because – provided the fuel treatment activities fall within qualifying parameters – they will be exempted from the requirement to submit a costly and complicated Timber Harvest Plan (THP).

Under this legislation, however, clearcutting or closely related silvicultural practices are not allowed. Also, a Registered Professional Forester is required to be involved in the thinning project and to certify that the planned operations will meet the targeted intent of this legislation.

We believe this bill, if enacted, would clearly complement the efforts that the federal government is making under the National Fire Plan, which identified the need to reduce flammable debris and vegetation in the critical wildland/urban interface zone. CLFA supports AB 344 because it cuts through red tape and will help to make our rural communities safer and less vulnerable to wildfire catastrophe.

Sincerely Yours,

William W. Keye
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cc: Assembly Natural Resource Committee Staff.

The California Licensed Foresters Association, with approximately 900 members, represents the common interests of Registered Professional Foresters in the State of California. The Association provides opportunities for continuing education and public outreach to its membership, which includes diverse professionals affiliated with public agencies, private timber companies, consultants and the academic community. Governed by an elected Board of Directors, CLFA was established in 1980 after the passage of the landmark California Professional Foresters Law.