



CALIFORNIA
LICENSED
FORESTERS
ASSOCIATION

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April 1, 2003

The Honorable John Burton
President Pro Tempore
California State Senate
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Reference: SB 810
CLFA Position: Oppose

Dear Mr. Burton,

The California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) has read your SB 810, as amended 3/26, and cannot support this bill.

At a time when California imports 80% of the wood that we use from other states and foreign countries, we feel that additional regulatory pressures upon forest management here in the Golden State will only further impair the global environment by continuing the trend of exporting the environmental impacts of our wood consumption habits to distant lands.

California contains 19 million acres of temperate forests – almost 20% of our state's total land area. Yet we are currently harvesting less than 25% of the growth that these forests are incurring, while boosting wood imports from regions which very likely have less stringent standards of environmental protection than are in place here.

Since 1990, timber harvest levels in this state have tumbled 60%, while overall wood consumption has continued to rise. There is an ethical disconnect at work here that is deeply troubling to California's professional foresters. After all, we are *working environmentalists*.

With regard to the specifics of SB 810, CLFA believes that this legislation represents an end run around existing forest practice standards. Current standards already place strict regulatory requirements upon California's forest landowners and managers. Existing rules already provide state water quality regulators with ample authority to act to preserve the state's water quality and to enforce Basin Plan requirements.

The idea of placing regional water quality control boards in charge of regulating the rate of timber harvesting as is proposed by your legislation would have the effect of transferring regulatory authority to them – authority that should properly remain with the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection. Asking water quality professionals to dictate the rate of timber harvest in a watershed could be viewed as something akin to employing

a skilled plumber to oversee the work of a master carpenter. It just will not work, and is not good resource policy.

Mr. Burton, trees grow with fertile soil, adequate rainfall and sunlight. Vast areas of the Golden State are blessed with these combined attributes in abundance. Rather than importing the vast majority of our wood, perhaps now is the time for state policy makers to recognize that simply cutting off supply without addressing demand and consumption is not a sustainable or responsible standard of environmental stewardship.

There are no easy answers, but legislation that contributes to the ongoing decline of forest management activity and capital investment here – in a state where we can sustainably produce so much more of the wood that we consume – is something that the vast majority of California’s professional foresters will continue to oppose.

Thank you for the opportunity to share CLFA’s views on SB 810.

Sincerely Yours,

William W. Keye
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cc: Senator Kuehl, Natural Resource Committee Chair
Senator Oller, Natural Resource Committee Vice-Chair
William Craven, Senate Natural Resource Committee Consultant

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.