



CALIFORNIA
LICENSED
FORESTERS
ASSOCIATION

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March 27, 2018

Assembly Member Monique Limón,
37th Assembly District
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0037

RE: AB-1956 SUPPORT

California Licensed Foresters Association (CLFA) supports AB-1956 (Limón) as a step in the right direction to help landowners protect themselves from wildfires that are more numerous, larger, more intense, and more damaging than those in recorded history. The proposed legislation removes Public Resources Code (PRC) 4123, replacing it with 4124.

Vegetative fuel management is an expensive endeavor, preventing many small landowners from engaging in it. Much of the wildfire damage this past summer and fall occurred in chaparral and other non-forest vegetation types. As ecosystem and landscape managers, foresters recognize that forest and non-forest vegetation are interconnected and should be considered both as a whole system and independently.

The addition of Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) to the working group is appropriate as they have proven to be helpful liaisons between landowners and agencies. Many CLFA members are employed by RCDs.

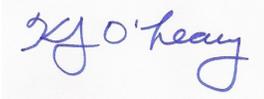
We feel that the law should include "high fire hazard severity zones" in addition to the proposed "very high" zones. Deserving landowners may be missed by the state's "very high hazard" mapping and should be given an opportunity to apply for project assistance and funding. Funds could be awarded based on need, including consideration of the state's fire hazard severity designation.

Pre-commercial thinning and selective harvesting were named in PRC 4123 but are not named in the proposed replacement PRC 4124. They are legitimate fuel treatments that reduce fire hazard in the right circumstances. Foresters place a high importance on fuel arrangement, also described as horizontal and vertical continuity of fuels. Forest thinning reduces this continuity by separating tree crowns (horizontal continuity) and reducing the middle story which connects the understory to the overstory (vertical continuity). At the same time we recognize the importance of variability of habitat types and that interlocking tree crowns and middle story vegetation can be valuable to wildlife. These thinning and selective harvesting practices may fall under the umbrella of the proposed legislation as "fire prevention activities" in the category of "mechanical vegetation management".

Reestablishing the state's working group by replacing PRC 4123 with 4124, could help provide a path for landowners to conduct fuel reduction projects that would not have otherwise occurred. Every landowner that engages in these projects is protecting their neighbors as well as themselves. In this way there is a synergistic effect that grows stronger with every new participant.

For the reasons stated above the California Licensed Foresters Association supports AB-1956 and hopes to work with you on this noble effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "K O'Leary". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "K" and "O".

Thank you for your consideration,
Kieran O'Leary
President
California Licensed Foresters Association

CLFA was formed by Registered Professional Foresters (RPFs) in 1980. The Association represents Industrial, Consulting, Academic or Public foresters working together for the common cause of enhancing the role of the Professional Forester in California.