



April 5, 2018

The Honorable Anna Caballero  
State Capitol Room, 5158  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2889 (Caballero). State Board of Forestry and Fire Prevention: Professional Foresters. (As amended on March 19, 2018)**  
**NOTICE OF SUPPORT**

Dear Assembly Member Caballero:

The organizations listed above strongly support AB 2889, which would create the Timber Harvest Plan submitters' Bill of Rights.

In 2012, the timber industry supported AB 1492 which, among other things, created a 1% assessment on lumber products sold in California. The dedicated funding is used to support the activities and costs of the departments associated with the review of projects or permits necessary to conduct timber harvest operations, but also to identify

and implement efficiencies in the regulations of timber harvesting between state agencies. AB 2889 would align perfectly with the intent of AB 1492.

Under existing law, prior to conducting any timber operations, a Timber Harvesting Plan (THP) must be submitted for approval. This document is a CEQA-equivalent document with Cal Fire serving as the lead agency, while other departments including Fish and Wildlife, Water Resources and Conservation serve as a part of the review team. Adding up the length of time for all the steps of the THP amounts to 72 days; however, the *2017 Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund Program Report* noted that review time averaged 127 days, increasing from 107 days from the previous year. Even after THP approval, THP submitters must then seek additional permits such as a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement (known as 1600 permits) and permits associated with non-point source discharges which extends the review time well past 127 days.

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) created a Bill of Rights for Environmental Permit Applicants in an effort to make environmental permitting more efficient, less costly, and to ensure that those seeking permits receive timely responses. AB 2889 would establish a similar Bill of Rights based upon Cal EPA's work. It would require the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to have an Ombudsman to work with THP submitters, require a timely decision on THPs, and create a right to coordinate and partner with a single lead agency.

Regulatory reform and permit streamlining are an integral component to restoring our forests in a timely manner. Long term management means using prescribed fire, removing drought and beetle-killed trees, and thinning our forests. Private timberland owners are not the only ones that manage the forests. This type of work needs to also be done by utility companies, conservation easement organizations, Native American tribes, state and federal governments, and nonprofits.

The devastating wildfires of 2017 are a tragic reminder of the need to better manage our forests. There are major challenges to a new management approach for healthy forests, but as the fires of last year taught us, doing nothing will endanger more lives, threaten additional property, and compromise our environment. Our organizations stand ready to partner with Assembly Member Caballero and Calforests to improve the health and resiliency of our forests.

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