

Rural County Representatives Implores State Legislature to Action on Wildfire Prevention

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As deadly wildfires continue to burn in California, several in the Northstate, the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), of which Tehama County is a member, sent a four-page letter on Aug. 8, imploring the California Legislature and its Wildfire Preparedness & Response Legislative Conference Committee to take much needed action in order to prevent and minimize future catastrophic wildfires.

While the appropriate urgency has yet to be given to increasing the pace and scale of managing and restoring both state and federal forest lands within California's borders, the state legislature now has a unique opportunity to impact future wildfires by implementing real solutions that will help prevent loss of lives, destruction of property, and profound emissions of greenhouse gases and other air pollutants, states RCRC.

Formed by Gov. Jerry Brown and legislative leaders earlier this summer, the conference committee was initially established to address wildfire preparedness and response.

However, according to RCRC, in recent weeks the conference committee has focused its efforts on utility issues, circumventing the real root cause of the wildfire problems continually plaguing the state – inadequate forest management practices.

“Wildfire risk is no longer just a concern in remote, rural areas, but is becoming a wider public safety concern as the wildland urban interface spreads over larger areas of the state due to climate change and the lingering impacts of the recent five-year drought,” said Rex Bohn, RCRC chair and Humboldt County supervisor. “RCRC has long advocated for an advancement in California's forest management practices as the true solution to California's wildland fire problem.”

In the letter, RCRC offers three recommendations as a starting point for the conference committee's consideration: Expanding partnerships with federal land managers; streamlining permitting and regulatory processes; and promoting wood products utilization.

RCRC is a 35 member county service organization that champions policies on behalf of California's rural counties. RCRC represents the collective, unique interests of its membership, providing legislative and regulatory representation at the state and federal levels.

https://www.appeal-democrat.com/corning_observer/news/rural-county-representatives-implores-state-legislature-to-action-on-wildfire/article_7b952ba2-a0f0-11e8-8d9a-6f33998e2393.html