



RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES  
OF CALIFORNIA

October 31, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chair, Senate Committee on  
Environment & Public Works  
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Draft Wildfire Prevention Legislation**

Dear Chair Barrasso:

On behalf of the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC), I am writing to express support for recent draft legislation that promotes active forest management in order to reduce the risk of high-severity wildfire and ensures equitable sharing of forest revenues with county governments. RCRC is an association of thirty-five rural California counties, and the RCRC Board of Directors is comprised of elected supervisors from each of those member counties.

Approximately one-third of California's one hundred million acres is forested, with a full one-fifth of the State's total acreage managed by the USDA Forest Service (USFS). More than seventy percent of the USFS land in California falls within the borders of RCRC's thirty-five member counties. Management of those lands is of particular importance to our rural communities as the severity, intensity and frequency of wildfires increase each year in California, escalating concerns for both public safety and the health of the State's forests and forested watersheds.

California is also facing the enhanced challenges related to widespread, drought-induced tree mortality on federally-managed lands, which intensifies wildfire risk and increases the urgency to manage these forest lands as expeditiously and efficiently as possible. It will take several years for these forests to recover from such a widespread mortality event, and enhanced management of these lands is paramount to prevention of wildfire and the safety, health, and welfare of those living in the surrounding communities. RCRC supports provisions in the draft legislation to streamline regulations in order to more expeditiously execute vital forest management projects.

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RCRC member counties also support stewardship contracting incentives, and are supportive of the equitable sharing of stewardship contracting revenues with counties. This is consistent with historic practices, and benefits critical county services such as transportation, infrastructure and education.

For these reasons, we are pleased to support the draft legislation, and we appreciate your efforts to prevent wildfires and promote healthier, more resilient federal forest lands. If you should have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (916) 447-4806 or [sheaton@rcrcnet.org](mailto:sheaton@rcrcnet.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Staci Heaton", written over a light gray circular watermark or background.

STACI HEATON  
Regulatory Affairs Advocate

cc: The Honorable Thomas R. Carper, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on  
Environment & Public Works  
The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Member of the U.S. Senate  
The Honorable Kamala Harris, Member of the U.S. Senate  
RCRC Board of Directors