

# County of Placer

## Board of Supervisors

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September 14, 2020

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, Senator  
United States Senate  
331 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

### Re: Support of S. 4431—Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act

On behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, I write to convey our support of your bill, S. 4431, the Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act. As California struggles with another devastating fire season, we appreciate your leadership in moving legislation to significantly boost Placer County's efforts to protect the health of our residents, forests, and rural communities.

As you know, Placer County is home to over 5 million acres of forestland, most of which is federally owned. These lands provide a broad range of environmental and economic benefits; however, decades of undergrowth, coupled with the recent drought, have dramatically increased the size and intensity of wildfires, threatening homes, businesses, and livelihoods.

To address these threats, this bipartisan legislation provides funding for several of the state's highest forest management priorities, including development of landscape-scale forest management plans, collaborative efforts to expand use of prescribed burning, and expedited environmental reviews in emergency situations. This legislation also authorizes a new workforce development program to prepare Americans for growing jobs in this sector - more important than ever given current levels of unemployment.

The legislation also strengthens our longstanding partnership with the U.S. Forest Service and other federal agencies in addressing the risk of wildfires and improving the health and resilience of our forests and communities. Through shared stewardship agreements and other intergovernmental efforts, we are increasingly collaborating with federal agencies to achieve our shared forest and watershed management goals throughout the County.

Finally, the legislation also increases funding for important weatherization and distributed energy systems. Allowing FEMA hazardous mitigation grants to be used for the installation of fire-resistant wires and the burial of transmission wires decreases the likelihood of wildfire ignition through electrical infrastructure—a vital step to protecting our communities and making them less vulnerable to de-energization events. The bill would also create a new grant program through the U.S. Department of Energy to facilitate the removal and transportation of woody biomass to conversion facilities, now problematic as transportation costs have limited our ability to achieve our forest management goals. Taken together, all these programs are essential to create more resilient communities at risk from wildfire.

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Thank you again for your continued leadership in protecting the health of our forests and the safety of our communities through this important and timely legislation. Should you have any questions regarding our position, please contact Jane Christenson, Assistant County Executive Officer at [jchristenson@placer.ca.gov](mailto:jchristenson@placer.ca.gov), or at (530) 889-4030.

Sincerely,

COUNTY of PLACER



Bonnie Gore, Chair (District 1)  
Placer County Board of Supervisors

Cc: The Honorable Senator Kamala Harris  
The Honorable Congressman Doug LaMalfa  
The Honorable Congressman, Tom McClintock  
Placer County Board of Supervisors  
Todd Leopold, Placer County Executive Officer  
California State Association of Counties  
Holland and Knight