

County of Placer Board of Supervisors

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March 17, 2023

The Honorable Doug LaMalfa, Representative
House of Representatives, 1th District of California
172 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
Sent via email to: Alexandra.Lavy@mail.house.gov

Subject: Support for H.R. 1586 Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023.

Dear Congressman LaMalfa,

On behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our support for H.R. 1586 Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023. We appreciate your leadership on this critical issue and that the legislation has strong bi-partisan support.


H.R. 1586 creates a Clean Water Act exemption for federal, state, local, and tribal firefighting agencies to use fire retardant to fight wildfires. Fire retardant is an essential tool used to contain or slow the spread of wildfires. Providing a Clean Water Act exemption so that federal, state, local, and tribal firefighting agencies can continue to use fire retardant is necessary to keep this tool available. Our fire prone communities are at risk every year from the threat of wildfire. It is critical for the survival of our communities, forests, and safety of fire crew members to utilize retardant when deemed necessary. We have seen time and again, using retardant slows the spread of fire, protects homes, infrastructure, and communities by creating a boundary line of attack for fire crews.

Currently the Forest Service and other agencies are operating under the assumption that a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit is not required for the use of fire retardant because the regulations specifically state that fire control is a "non-point source silvicultural activity" and communications from the Environmental Protection Agency dating back to 1993 indicated a permit is not required. This bill would specifically state that a permit is not required for fire retardant to fight wildfires. If fire retardant is not available for use in the 2023 fire year, firefighters and individuals living in forested communities, including Placer County would be in greater danger, and millions of acres of forested land and billions of dollars of infrastructure would be at risk.

For these reasons, we strongly support for H.R. 1586 - Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023. If you have any questions, please reach out to Joel Joyce, Legislative and Governmental Affairs Coordinator at 530-889-4026 or at jjoyce@placer.ca.gov

Sincerely,

COUNTY OF PLACER



Jim Holmes, Chair
Placer County Board of Supervisors

Cc: Placer County Board of Supervisors
The Honorable Kevin Kiley, Congressman CA-03
The Honorable Senator Dianne Feinstein
The Honorable Senator Alex Padilla
Holland and Knight