



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

AGENDA ITEM NO.

C-12

For the meeting of: October 7, 2014

Date: September 29, 2014
To: Board of Supervisors
From: Supervisor Ryan Sundberg
Subject: Letter of Support for Forest Fire Prevention Pilot Project Exemption – Proposed Revisions to Slash Requirements

RECOMMENDATION(S): That the Board of Supervisors authorize the Chair to sign the Letter.

SOURCE OF FUNDING: N/A

DISCUSSION: In 2003, after the tragic wildfires in Southern California, the state legislature enacted the Forest Protection Exemption law (FFPE). FFPE sought to incentivize landowners to engage in forest thinning projects intended to reduce the threat of wildfire and to lessen the intensity of wildfires. Unfortunately, in the past decade, fire-safe thinning of private forest lands has dropped to fewer than a thousand acres annually,

One of the main barriers for landowners to participate in the Pilot Project Exemption is the liability of the removal of slash. The proposed revisions to the slash requirements would increase the maximum allowed post-logging height from 9 inches to 18 inches, and is intended to encourage landowners to remove smaller diameter trees and fuel ladders in an effort to decrease the threat of catastrophic wildfires that have been so destructive to our forests, our water resources and the surrounding communities.

FINANCIAL IMPACT: N/A

OTHER AGENCY INVOLVEMENT: N/A

ALTERNATIVES TO STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS: Board discretion.

ATTACHMENTS: Letter of Support.

Prepared by Kathy Hayes

Signature Ryan Sundberg

REVIEW: Auditor County Counsel Personnel Risk Manager Other

TYPE OF ITEM:
XX Consent
Departmental
Public Hearing
Other

PREVIOUS ACTION/REFERRAL:

Board Order No.

Meeting of:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
Upon motion of Supervisor Bass Seconded by Supervisor Lovelace
Ayes Sundberg, Lovelace, Bohn, Fennell, Bass
Nays
Abstain
Absent

and carried by those members present the Board hereby approves the recommended action contained in this Board report.

Dated: Oct. 7, 2014
By: Kathy Hayes, Clerk of the Board



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

# COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT

825 5<sup>TH</sup> STREET

EUREKA, CALIFORNIA 95501-1153    PHONE (707) 476-2390    FAX (707) 445-7299

October 7, 2014

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Attn: Kevin Conway, Staff Forester  
P.O. Box 944246  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

RE:    Comments on "Forest Fire Prevention Pilot Project Exemption" – Proposed Revisions to  
      Slash Treatment Requirements

Dear Chair Gillless and Board Members:

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors urges the Board of Forestry to adopt the proposed revisions to the slash treatment requirements for the "Forest Fire Prevention Pilot Project Exemption" (Pilot Project Exemption) as noticed by the Board on September 12, 2014. We also encourage the Board to adopt the change to the rule that includes the coastal counties as authorized AB 2142.

The proposed revision would increase the maximum allowed post-logging slash height from 9 inches to 18 inches, and would modify the timing for slash treatments for operations that occur later in the season. The Pilot Project Exemption is intended to encourage landowners to remove smaller diameter trees and fuel ladders in an effort to decrease the threat of catastrophic wildfires that have been so destructive to our forests, our water resources and the surrounding communities.

One of the main barriers for landowners to participate in the Pilot Project Exemption is the liability of the removal of slash. The vast majority of this material will be removed and piled at landings. In many areas in need of thinning, biomass markets are not available. The slash material, created by the thinning projects, is currently a significant cost barrier to the landowner who would participate in the Pilot Project. Imposing the additional standard to lop remaining slash to a 9-inch depth would prevent many landowners from utilizing this Pilot Project Exemption.

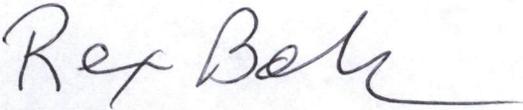
An 18-inch maximum slash depth standard combined with a lengthier time period to burn the piles will reduce treatment costs and create flexibility to ensure landowners are able to utilize the Exemption to create meaningful change benefit to the landscape and threat to catastrophic wildfire.

California's forests and forest communities are under severe threat of catastrophic wildfire due to the on-going drought, a warming climate and years of over-growth due to lack of sustainable forest management. The Board must create a viable solution for the increased widespread forest fuel-reduction projects for the betterment of the environment and the protection of the communities. The Pilot Project must be functional and economically affordable to landowners as much as possible to ensure homeowners participation.

For these reasons, we strongly encourage the Board to adopt the proposed revisions to the Pilot Project Exemption that have been noticed in the 15-day Notice and to request CalFIRE provide annual reports on its effectiveness.

Thank you for the opportunity to once again comment on this very important matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Rex Bohn". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rex Bohn, Chair  
Humboldt County Board of Supervisors

RB:kh