



October 15, 2026

The Honorable Mike McGuire
Senate Majority Leader, 2nd District
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 79 California Forest Protection, Firefighter Support, and Forest Restoration Act. –
SUPPORT**

Dear Chair Caballero, Vice Chair Dahle, and Members of the Senate Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources,

The California Chamber of Commerce is writing in strong support of Senate Bill 79. At its heart, SB 79 protects the communities, workers, and employers who live and work near California's forests. It invests in stopping wildfires before they start, and it gives the state a clear way to measure whether that investment works.

Prevention costs less than recovery. When a wildfire hits, families lose homes, workers lose jobs, businesses lose customers, and sometimes even their places of operation. SB 79 allocates \$20 million to fuel breaks, hazardous vegetation removal, forest thinning, prescribed fire, and firefighter training and equipment, so communities are safer and better prepared before the next fire season. For California's employers, that means fewer shutdowns and a more stable place to hire and invest.

Wildfire protection is economic protection. Fires do not only burn forests. They threaten rural jobs, disrupt local economies, and make it harder and more expensive for businesses and homeowners to get insurance. By focusing on communities in high and very high fire hazard areas, SB 79 helps protect the places where many Californians earn a living, and it supports the contractors, crews, and local workers who do the restoration and cleanup work.

Results should be measured. SB 79 is a one-time pilot with annual reporting to the Legislature on acres treated, funds spent, and how well the projects worked. Grants go first to projects with measurable wildfire prevention benefits, and CAL FIRE works with local fire departments, tribes, nonprofits, and private landowners to make each dollar go further. That is a responsible way to spend public money, and it lets the Legislature decide on future funding based on real results.

It asks nothing new of employers. SB 79 creates no new taxes, fees, or mandates on businesses. It also keeps existing environmental protections for wildlife habitat, watersheds, and native vegetation in place.

Senate Bill 79 is a practical step toward protecting California's communities, forests, and economy. California's employers are neighbors, coworkers, and community members, and what protects their communities protects the families who depend on them.

For these reasons, the California Chamber of Commerce supports SB 79 and respectfully urges the Legislature to vote in favor of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Aishah Apalara

Aishah Apalara (She/Her/Hers) - Lobbyist

