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Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California

1021 O Street, 9th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Monique Limon
President pro Tempore,
CA State Senate
Sacramento, CA 95814

Robert Rivas
Speaker,
CA State Assembly
Sacramento,
CA 95815

Dear Governor Newsom, Senate President Pro Tempore, and Assembly Speaker,

These comments are made on behalf of the Sierra Club. We are writing regarding Senate Bill 79, the California Forest Protection, Firefighter Support, and Forest Restoration Act. Senate Bill 79 proposes key measures for forest management, community cleanup, and research to prevent wildfires, which remain a key concern in California and will continue to impact Californians. We urge the Assembly, Senate, and Governor of California to support this bill and grant the requested funding for its components.

California remains devastated by wildfire fallout every year. They have greatly impacted air quality, land, homes, businesses, and more, affecting residents' quality of life and the state's overall success. The current presidential administration's anti-environmental agenda has further prompted the need for stronger protections in California. Such disasters have destroyed entire towns, such as Greenville, and require immediate attention from the legislature.

Senate Bill 79 remains a key component of this fight. The bill proposes creating a pilot program within the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to support forest recovery, fund firefighter departments & resources, support tribes, and more. This bill not only enhances our ability to prevent wildfires, but also includes critical measures to train and support those who manage the fallout. Protecting and managing forests will not only help the battle against climate change, but can also create employment for those in the state. The bill directly addresses this by expanding research funds to prevent fires before they start and budgeting for increased firefighter training.

Moreover, Senate Bill 79 expands efforts to increase forest quality by funding the removal of wildfire-damaged debris. Trees, especially older trees and forests, absorb more carbon than newer trees typically. Replanting native trees helps keep forests healthier and supports wildlife habitats. Efforts to clear debris and remove hazardous materials move the state toward this goal.

Importantly, the proposed bill improves the quality of life for those most impacted by areas of fires. It provides funding to remove debris from communities dealing with the fallout. It improves our ability to protect California's forests while also directly supporting efforts to help the broader Californian population.

Lastly, to support the California population, we must support all of its peoples, including Native tribes, because their land is directly impacted by fires and projects conducted on their land . Therefore, the bill includes consultation with Native American tribes on projects impacting their resources.

The Sierra Club continues its efforts to protect land and preserve forests from the impacts of climate change. However, doing so means supporting research and legislation that advocates for stronger land protections. It becomes increasingly important to fund programs and bills such as Senate Bill 79 to combat the fallout of global warming and our human destruction of the planet.

Given the scope of Bill 79, the \$20,000,000 reallocated from the general fund is insignificant compared to the benefits it provides for people and the environment. We urge you to support Bill 79 to protect California forests and resources.

Thank you for your consideration; we look forward to your support.

Britney Vasquez-Orozco
Representative, Sierra Club

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