



# Central Coast Forest Association

*Caring for forests, protecting our land*

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April 6, 2014

To: Assembly Natural Resources Committee  
1020 N Street, Room 164  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1867 Timber harvest plans: exemption: reducing flammable materials

Dear Chairman Chesbro and members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee,

The Central Coast Forest Association (CCFA) is an organization comprised of forest landowners, resource professionals and others concerned with forest issues and land use policy in the Central Coast region of California.

CCFA supports AB 1867 in principle and feels it can fill a critical need in the Southern Subdistrict.

Tens of thousands of people live in the narrow watersheds of Santa Cruz County, including the San Lorenzo Valley and the Soquel Creek watershed. The few evacuation routes in these areas are narrow, winding mountain roads that do not have the capacity to clear these valleys in a wildfire emergency.

These watersheds are forested with tightly-packed groves of second growth redwood. The canopy is closed in many areas and there is abundant duff and ladder fuels. The Santa Cruz Mountains are considerably drier in the summer than Mendocino or Humboldt counties. This generates a much higher fire hazard. This hazard is demonstrated by the numerous fires the area has had in recent years, including the Summit Fire (2008), the Martin Fire (2008), the Mount Madonna Fire (2008) and the Lockheed Fire (2009).

In 2007, Santa Cruz County passed ordinances that only permit timber harvesting on land zoned TP and require a parcel to be at least 80 acres in order to be zoned TP. This left a lot of forest residents in Santa Cruz County without a legal means to effectively and affordably thin their land for fire safety.

With the existing local regulations and ordinances, the high forestland population and lack of evacuation routes, and the dry summers of the Santa Cruz Mountains, it is only a matter of time before there is a wildfire tragedy in the area.

The only way this can be prevented is by thinning regulations permitting the reduction of the overload of flammable materials. Given the extent of the hazard, the difficulty in handling a wildfire in our canyons once it ignites and the lack of other methods of accomplishing the goal, this area is in need more liberal thinning regulations than the rest of the state. We urge the committee to keep the Southern Subdistrict's needs in mind in crafting this legislation.

Sincerely,  
Catherine Moore  
Member, CCFA Board of Directors