

BEFORE
THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF THE COUNTY OF MADERA
STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of) Resolution No.: 2014 - _____
)
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS) A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
) SUSTAINABLE FOREST MANAGEMENT
) POLICIES
_____)

WHEREAS, the health, welfare, and quality of life of Sierra Nevada region and the Central Valley is dependent upon the health of our forests, which provide a multiple benefits and uses that include water supply, air quality, aesthetics, recreation, wildlife habitat, industry, and jobs; and

WHEREAS, a healthy forest and sustainable ecology requires active management through tree and debris removal, and that the two primary methods for this removal is by combustion or manual removal; and

WHEREAS, while prevention of wildfires is beneficial to communities and local wildlife, decades of fire suppression efforts across the Sierra Nevada region has led to the buildup of combustible materials which have increased the frequency and intensity of forest fires; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada Conservancy has identified that more than more land has burned in the first four-and-a-half-years of this decade than the seven previous decades combined, and that percentage high-intensity fires has increased dramatically as well; and

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WHEREAS, environmental restrictions have dramatically reduced timber harvesting, as seen in Madera County which has experienced a ninety percent reduction in its timber harvests over the last fifty years, and that continued efforts to designate more wilderness areas as habitats for endangered species will further reduce harvestable lands; and

WHEREAS, the increased frequency and intensity of wildfires is resulting in escalating property and financial losses, as well as deforestation and habitat destruction; and

WHEREAS, the growing number and size of wildfires have a major impact upon mountain and valley air quality, and negates the efforts of State and regional agencies to improve air quality or reduce the human impacts from climate change; and

WHEREAS, the Sierra Nevada region supplies sixty percent of the state's developed water supply, but the unmanaged growth of trees and other vegetation is directly impacting the watershed and Central Valley groundwater basins by increasing canopy evaporation of snowpack, creating abnormally high consumption of groundwater supplies, and dehydration and encroachment of meadow systems; and

WHEREAS, wildfire damage has secondary impacts for the Sierra Nevada and the Central Valley region, including reduced late-season snowpack, which impacts available water supply through the summer season, as well as increased erosion problems which reduces water quality and storage capacity of downstream reservoirs; and

WHEREAS, the current drought conditions serve only to exacerbate the danger from uncontrolled wildfires; and

WHEREAS, The Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 (H.R. 1904), creates a Federal mandate to thin overstocked forested lands, and provides funding for the same; and

WHEREAS, The United States Forest Service report "An Ecosystem Management Strategy for Sierran Mixed-Conifer Forests" (PSW-GTR-220) establishes the recommendations and definitions on what healthy forest management is for the Sierra Nevada region.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Madera, the State of California, declares that:

1. Allowing forested lands to burn uncontrollably is dangerous to people and property, and is destructive to wildlife habitats; and
2. Timber harvesting provides the tree and debris removal that otherwise would need to be burned, and that this activity is mutually beneficial to man and nature, and is a critical element in sustainable forest management; and
3. Even after an area of forest has burned, prompt harvesting and removal of the burned timber still provides economic benefit, and aids in forest restoration by providing opportunities for replanting and the prevention of catastrophic secondary fires; and
4. The Board supports a restoration of this vital industry within Madera County.

BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that the Board of Supervisors declares:

1. Federal law mandates the thinning of forested lands for fire prevention and that known definitions allow for immediate action in Madera County; and

2. The United States Forest Service as the management agency for the Sierra Nevada Wilderness is obligated to fulfill these mandates on all federally managed lands, including those lands within Madera County; and
3. The safety of Madera County and its foothill communities are jeopardized by the failures to adopt sustainable forest policies, and that the Board may take all lawful actions as necessary to protect the health, safety, and well-being of its residents.

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The foregoing Resolution was adopted this ____ day of _____, 2014, by the following vote:

Supervisor Nevarez voted: _____
 Supervisor Rogers voted: _____
 Supervisor Farinelli voted: _____
 Supervisor Rodriguez voted: _____
 Supervisor Wheeler voted: _____

 Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

 Clerk, Board of Supervisors

Approved as to Legal Form:
 COUNTY COUNSEL

By 