June 15, 2018

The Honorable Robert M. Hertzberg, Chair

Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

State Capitol, Room 5046

Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: SB 1079 (Monning) – SUPPORT**

Dear Senator Hertzberg,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations, we would like to express our support for SB 1079 (Monning). If passed, this bill would authorize the Director of the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CALFIRE) to allow advanced payments from the Forest Health Grant and Fire Prevention Fund Grant Programs for projects that create healthier forests and reduce the risk of wildfires. Through these programs, up to $200 million was made available to nonprofits, special districts and local agencies in order to proactively restore forest health, reduce wildfire impacts, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and sequester carbon.

California is experiencing larger and more intense wildfires throughout the state.  We are in desperate need of action to make our forests healthy and more resilient. At the forefront of these efforts have been Fire Safe Councils, other nonprofits, and special districts in California. These groups are dependent on the availability of advanced grant funds to achieve these goals.  Many of the smaller groups are unable to pay for project costs upfront then wait for reimbursement, which can typically take 60-90 days after submittal of support documentation to CALFIRE. Unfortunately, not being able to front load these costs leaves these groups ineligible to apply for funds and thus unable to do important fire protection and prevention projects.

In order to reduce the incidence of catastrophic wildfires, SB 1079 will allow CALFIRE to advance payments to nonprofit organizations, special districts, and Fire Safe Councils in order to do critical fire prevention work. We respectfully ask for your support when SB 1079 is heard in the Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee.

Sincerely,

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