

Hannigan, Edith@BOF

From: Calli-Jane DeAnda <firesafe@buttefiresafe.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 10, 2018 12:23 PM
To: Vegetation Treatment Program@BOF
Subject: Comment in Support of the PEIR

Dear Board of Forestry,

I strongly support the proposed State-Wide Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) – Draft Program Environmental Impact Report (PEIR). For the health and well-being of those facing wildfire risks in Butte County, I strongly encourage the California State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection Board to accept the PEIR and begin implementation of the VTP.

The forest, homes and watersheds in Butte County are at risk to wildfire. We have had several devastating wildfires in the last decade which have burned hundreds of homes and thousands of acres of forests. Our forests are over grown and need thinning to increase their health and ability to withstand wildfire. We experienced four catastrophic wildfires in 2017. Unfortunately, this year's impacts are not unprecedented. We feel that by thinning the overstocked forest lands of ladder fuels we will greatly reduce the intensity of wildfires and the loss of homes and habitats.

We want to reduce the barriers to forest thinning work and increase the number and size of these projects so that we can adequately address the wildfire challenge we have.

The Butte County community, primarily through the leadership of the Butte County Fire Safe Council, have taken considerable efforts to reduce wildfire fuels and risk. However, local wildfire fuels reduction programs have been stymied by existing rules and procedures that are outdated, inefficient, and costly. Under current rules, wildland fire prevention programs require conducting a project-by-project Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which results in increased costs and delays without any environmental benefit. A typical project can take up to 3 years to go through the EIR process. In the case of a small 45 acre project, the EIR costs alone could be \$45,000. The cost of conducting an EIR has increased from 2-5% to 10-15% of project costs, and has become a major cost component of wildfire reduction programs. The increased cost of conducting EIRs comes at the expense of wildfire fuel reduction projects. Having the ability to work under the VTP would have enormous benefit without posing adverse impacts to the environment.

Thank you for your leadership in the PEIR and its ability to help improve our states forests.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Calli-Jane DeAnda

Executive Director

Butte County Fire Safe Council

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