

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 5064
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
TEL (916) 651-4003
FAX (916) 651-4803

California State Senate

BILL DODD

SENATOR, THIRD DISTRICT



COMMITTEES
AGRICULTURE
BUSINESS, PROFESSIONS AND
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
VETERANS AFFAIRS
SELECT COMMITTEE
CALIFORNIA'S WINE INDUSTRY
CO-CHAIR

CHAIR: SENATE GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
ATTN: Edith Hannigan, Board Analyst
VTP Draft PEIR Comments
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Ms. Edith Hannigan:

As the State Senator representing the counties of Napa and Sonoma, where many of the North Bay wildfires of 2017 occurred, I have become all too familiar with the dire need to better manage our timber resources and forest lands. It is imperative that we do as much as we can to reduce the threat of wildland fires, now, while the fires are out, so that we are in a better position to protect lives and property when the next wildland fire may ignite.

As wildfire losses continue to mount with each conflagration, it becomes evermore clear that public and private partners need the ability to implement wide-ranging fire prevention programs in their communities. The Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (VTP PEIR) would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off a statewide programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to timely address hazardous vegetative fuel and potentially reduce catastrophic losses.

A combination of manmade and natural factors has resulted in drastic increases in economic losses, resulting from not only wildfire suppression, but also losses to lives, homes and infrastructure. This precipitous increase in costs goes beyond jurisdictional boundaries and therefore requires a statewide strategy. A statewide PEIR for a vegetation management program will help jurisdictions implement projects that benefit communities regardless of geographical boundaries, and will place these individual projects within the larger context of fuel reduction work in California. Vegetation management conducted under the VTP EIR would be part of a landscape-level strategy to reduce fire risk in California. It is a level of planning and vegetation management that the state is currently in need of.



The VTP PEIR provides a much-needed avenue for communities to engage in fire prevention projects. The ability for implementation of fuel reduction work has diminished in recent years, leaving the growing number of communities in the wildland-urban interface vulnerable to wildfire. By opening a new path to CEQA compliance, the VTP PEIR provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire.

I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the VTP EIR.

Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Dodd". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

BILL DODD

Senator, 3rd Senate District