January 26, 2021

Senator Skinner, Chair, Budget Committee
Senator Wieckowski, Chair, Budget Sub-Committee on Resources, Environmental Protection, Energy and Transportation
State Capitol, Room 5019
Sacramento, CA 95814

Assembly Member Ting, Chair, Budget Committee
Assembly Member Bloom, Chair, Budget Sub-Committee on Resources and Transportation
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Appropriating FY 20-21 Wildfire Resilience Funding at Earliest Opportunity

Dear Senators Wieckowski and Skinner, and Assembly Members Bloom and Ting:


We write to urge that the Senate and Assembly include the Governor’s proposed $323 million early action appropriation for Wildfire and Forest Resilience in the earliest budget action.

The 2020 fire season was yet another wake-up call that California is unprepared for modern fire behavior. We saw record-breaking acreage burned; devastating natural areas, wiping out trees that have stood for more than 100 years, and destroying homes, businesses, and communities, and most tragically, resulting in the loss of life. The extreme smoke blanketed our state, keeping us inside for months, harming public health and undermining our climate progress. We must do more – and quickly – if we are to have a hope of avoiding a repeat of the past few fire seasons.

There are shovel-ready wildfire, community protection, and landscape resilience projects critical to addressing this current threat. However, these projects sit idle, simply waiting for funding to implement them. The sooner we can allocate fiscal year 2020-21 funding, the more likely these projects can be completed prior to the upcoming fire season. And we continue planning future actions and building momentum to achieve even more in the coming years.

There is broad agreement on the urgent need for these investments. Please appropriate the initial $323 million for wildfire resilience at the earliest opportunity. Delay benefits no one.

Earnestly,

Pacific Forest Trust
California Cattlemen’s Association
Defenders of Wildlife
Wine Institute
California Native Plant Society
Sierra Forest Legacy
Sierra Business Council
California Association of Wine Grape Growers
Natural Resources Defense Council
Napa Valley Grapegrowers
Napa Valley Vintners
California Wilderness Coalition
The Nature Conservancy

Coalition for Clean Air
US Green Building Council, Los Angeles
California State Parks Foundation
Sierra Foothill Conservancy
Bear Yuba Land Trust
Truckee Donner Land Trust
Placer Land Trust
Joel Joyce, Senior Management Analyst, Placer County
Eastern Sierra Land Trust
Sierra Nevada Conservancy
Sierra Nevada Alliance
Feather River Land Trust

Cc: Governor Gavin Newsom
Speaker Anthony Rendon
President pro Tempore Toni Atkins