

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

Board of Supervisors

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GEORGE TURNBOO
SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT II

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
45th President of the United States

Dear President Trump,

We need a change in the federal and state policies regarding the foothills of California. The mismanagement of the Eldorado National Forest has led to overgrown vegetation and deteriorating forest roads, which increase the potential for a catastrophic wildfire to occur. Environmental groups are largely to blame for the lack of forest management and have largely shut-down the logging industry in El Dorado County. We need common sense policies to allow our region to be protected from the costs of wildfire and mismanagement, so residents can feel safe living in a rural area.

The Trestle Project was a plan by the United States Forest Service (USFS) to manage an overgrown section of federal land near Grizzly Flats, California, that had been identified as being a considerable wildfire hazard. A study conducted by USFS to identify the project had concluded that the Trestle Project was necessary to complete to avoid a wildfire large enough to destroy the town of Grizzly Flats. Unfortunately, environmental groups like the Sierra Club and the John Muir Association, opposed the Trestle Project and even used the court system to prevent USFS from completing the necessary project. The Trestle Project was not completed by the time the 2021 Caldor Fire grew to catastrophic size and destroyed the town of Grizzly Flats as predicted by the USFS study. Residents began seeking remedy from the USFS for their response to forest management and wildfire, since the Caldor Fire began on federal lands. The residents found that the USFS had immunity from prosecution regarding both the failed forest management project and their lacking response once wildfire erupted.

Environmental groups are able to have their day in court to prevent forest management projects, but residents who suffer the results of prevented forest management are left with little recourse. Residents filing claim forms with the USFS have been denied, and seeking a day in court seems impossible as the USFS enjoys some form of legal immunity from their actions. There exists a dichotomy between environmental groups being able to seek legal remedies against a federal agency, and victims of wildfires who have no recourse against mismanagement by the same federal agency. Ideally, the environmental groups that indirectly cause forest management projects to be postponed would be held legally responsible for the effect of creating potentially dangerous wildfire conditions (see bookmarked pages of included packet). These same environmental groups have also impacted the logging industry as part of forest management by

using politics to advocate dogmatic policies and largely caused tremendous job loss and wildfire hazards in the El Dorado County region of California.

El Dorado County needs industrial logging to return to our region to ensure proper forest management, increased wildfire response and good wage paying jobs. Federal regulations and incentives can be changed to provide better economic conditions for our regional logging industry. Part of the problem we face is with bureaucratic decisions made by people who are out-of-touch with the regions or industries they are affecting. By resurrecting the logging industry, there would be many benefits to our state and national economy. For example, logging workers at local sawmills would stop work and deploy to any wildfire in the region as an effort to protect their product and prevent fire from spreading. Logging would provide immediate forest management and increase the operability of forest roads required by logging industry to move around in the forest. Additionally, each tree that is removed from the forest allows further drainage of water into waterways, because tree roots soak up considerable water and water stuck in tree canopies evaporates before it reaches the ground. The lumber generated from logging helps to provide good paying American jobs and avoid the need to import lumber from other countries.

California has many challenges when it comes to common sense policies, due to the dogmatic politics of the populations around cities. The dense population centers in California dominate the political landscape and force residents in rural areas to abide by laws and regulations designed by people who lack understanding of rural regions. There seems to be a political push to prevent people from living in rural areas, whether by dogmatic beliefs, economic destitution or improper response to rural natural disasters. California leadership seems to lack the common sense needed to provide solutions to rural residents, and instead push for policies that make rural living difficult.

Please help the residents of El Dorado County, California, to overcome the political roadblocks at the state and federal level, so they can enjoy improved federal policy regarding forest management and legal recourse for accountability. Our region has endured increasing wildfires dangers due to a lack of common sense and a deliberate obfuscation of logging industry wisdom. Residents in El Dorado County enjoy a rural lifestyle, and we hope to protect their way of life through common sense policies that provide freedom and understanding over dogmatic political ideologies. We will need the help at the federal level to overcome the unique challenges we face to protect local residents so they can feel safe living in a rural region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G. Turnboo', with a stylized, flowing script.

George Turnboo
District 2 Supervisor
County of El Dorado