

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

Board of Supervisors

330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5652
(530) 622-3645 Fax



GEORGE TURNBOO
SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT II

March 2, 2026

The Honorable Alex Padilla
U.S. Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Padilla:

I write in support of the El Dorado County Water Agency's (Agency) Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) request for Community Project Funding (CPF) to support the Agency's Forest Management & Community Resiliency Project.

The headwaters region of the American and Cosumnes Rivers watersheds, which spans 1.5 million acres, is an incredibly valuable resource that provides far-reaching benefits for the region, state, nation, and even globally. These watersheds play a critical role in providing statewide water supply to millions of residents, businesses and farms; capturing runoff to protect downstream flooding; and yielding a host of other benefits like food, timber, energy, and outdoor recreation.

Recently, the watershed has been devastated by wildfires, in particular the Caldor and Mosquito fires. These wildfires destroyed homes and infrastructure, degraded ecosystems, contaminated water sources, and increased flooding risks. Both wildfires grew rapidly in the watershed due to excess forest fuels, resulting in nearly 300,000 acres burned. Active forest management and community resilience projects are urgently needed to prevent wildfires and mitigate future risks. Over 960,000 acres in these watersheds are at or above the 90th percentile for risk to homes on a national level. The estimated federal funding gap for wildfire mitigation and recovery in federal lands alone is approximately \$300 million.

Immediate funding is needed for projects in the priority areas to accelerate the pace and scale of ongoing and planned work to result in long-term protection of critical water supply assets and wildfire resilience. CPF funding will be utilized to immediately implement wildfire mitigation and recovery actions in key areas that are very high in terms of fire threat and cost. The five priority areas include Georgetown, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Crystal Basin, and the Caldor Burn Scar. These areas have NEPA already completed or are near completion, making them ready for immediate implementation and realization of tangible and critical federal, state, and local benefits. Projects funded by this CPF will include a variety of activities such as:

- fuels reduction treatments such as tree thinning
- post wildfire recovery actions including removal of dead fuels and replanting
- meadow restoration to improve hydrologic function
- roadway safety improvements to strengthen community resilience

In addition to addressing immediate threats to the watershed, the project also provides the following benefits:

- Strengthen water supply reliability by protecting water generated in the watershed which serves millions of downstream residents, agriculture, and the environment.
- Protects water quality by maintaining cold water resources that are crucial for water temperature and water quality management efforts.
- Reduces flood risks nearby and downstream by capturing and slowing runoff.
- Improves forest health by maintaining soil conditions, regulating water flow, preventing erosion, and protecting riparian areas.

Around half of the watershed lands are federally owned, and federal agencies play an indispensable role in maintaining the health and sustainability of these lands. I urge you to give all due consideration to this CPF request.

Sincerely,

George Turnboo
District 2 Supervisor
County of El Dorado