

September 10, 2013

To: The Honorable Fran Pavley, Chair
The Honorable Anthony J. Cannella, Vice Chair
Members, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee

From: Rex D. Frazier, President
Michael A. Gunning, Vice President
Kara Cross, General Counsel
Manolo P. Platin, Legislative Advocate

Re: AB 744 (Dahle) Timber harvesting plans: exempt activities
As Amended September 6, 2013

Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee, September 10, 2013
PIFC Position: Support

The Personal Insurance Federation of California, representing seven of the nation's largest insurance companies (State Farm, Farmers, Liberty Mutual Insurance, Progressive, Allstate, Mercury and Nationwide) who collectively write a majority of the personal line auto and home insurance in California, **supports AB 744: Timber harvesting plans: exempt activities by Assemblymember Dahle.**

AB 744 would help safeguard California against the growing threat of wildfires by increasing the stump diameter size of trees targeted for fire-hazard related clearance from 18-24 inches (the current limit) to 28-34 inches. Under current law, trees to be cleared are limited to a stump diameter of 18-24 inches, impeding the efforts of California's Fire Safe Councils in their efforts to reduce the number of trees that might cause crown fires in the event of a catastrophic wildfire. California Fire Safe Council is an organization comprised of 50 private and public organizations including PIFC and several of its member companies, dedicated to providing fire-reduction resources to California communities. By allowing larger stumps to qualify for clearance procedures, AB 744 will allow Fire Safe Councils across California to conduct more vegetation removal and fuel-reduction projects and result in healthier, more fire-resistant forests in California.

Most local Fire Safe Councils provide employment opportunities for community members by contracting with local foresters and direct-hiring vegetation management specialists for fuel reduction projects. Current law provides an exemption for fuel reduction projects (the Forest Fire Prevention Exemption), however, local Fire Safe Councils have been unable to use this Exemption as effectively as they might since the limit on the size of tree stumps to be cleared makes such projects less economically viable for local foresters. Vegetation thinning projects can significantly decrease the chance of wildfires but in the past decade the thinning of private forest lands has dropped to fewer than 1000 acres a year. AB 744 would provide an additional financial incentive for Fire Safe Councils to complete more vegetation removal around their homes and communities, using local companies and residents to conduct the projects and take responsibility for their defensible spaces.

For the reasons stated above PIFC **supports AB 744 (Dahle) and urges your "aye" vote.** If you have any questions regarding PIFC's position, please contact Manolo P. Platin at (916) 442-6646.

cc: Assemblymember Brian Dahle, Author
Assemblymember Richard S. Gordon, Co-Author
Gareth Elliot, Secretary of Legislative Affairs, Office of the Governor
William Craven, Chief Consultant, Senate Natural Resources and Water Committee
Steve McCarthy, Consultant, Senate Republican Caucus



STATE FARM

FARMERS

LIBERTY MUTUAL
INSURANCE

PROGRESSIVE

ALLSTATE

MERCURY

NATIONWIDE