



Personal Insurance Federation of California

California's Personal Lines Trade Association

REPRESENTING THE LEADING AUTOMOBILE AND HOMEOWNERS INSURERS

State Farm • Farmers • 21st Century Insurance Group • SAFECO • Progressive • NAMIC

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Director of Communications

DATE: June 17, 2005

TO: The Honorable Dean Florez, Chair
Members, Senate Governmental Organization Committee

FROM: Dan C. Dunmoyer, President
Rex Frazier, Vice President and General Counsel
Michael A. Gunning, Senior Legislative Advocate
Michael A. Paiva, Senior Legislative Advocate
E. Jerry Davies, Director of Communications

Re: AB 669 (La Suer), Firefighter Training and Standards
As Amended June 1, 2005
Senate Governmental Organization Committee – June 28, 2005
PIFC Position: Support

The Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC), representing insurers who write 50% of all homeowners' insurance sold in California, **supports AB 669** authored by Assembly Member La Suer.

Existing law requires the State Fire Marshal with policy guidance and advice from the State Board of Fire Services to, among other things, make fire services training and education programs available on a voluntary basis to fire departments through the California Fire Service and Education Program and to establish and validate recommended minimum standards for fire protection personnel and fire protection instructors at all career levels through the California Fire and Arson Training Act.

AB 699 would create the California Firefighter Training Standards Task Force, composed of specified state agency heads and representatives from other associations and entities, to coordinate with participating agencies and stakeholders to conduct a statewide needs assessment and make recommendations for the implementation and funding of a comprehensive, continuing training and education structure that meets the needs of the disciplines within the fire service profession. The bill would also require the task force to make a specified report to the Legislature no later than December 31, 2005.

The insurance industry is keenly aware of the key roles state agencies and associations play in firefighting. The 2003 Southern California wildfires are a perfect example of the importance of firefighter training. More than 3,710 homes and another 1,300 structures burned to the ground. The reaction and dedication to saving lives and property by all of the agencies involved in suppression of the fires was exemplary. The insurance industry paid out more than \$2.06 billion in claims from the fires. Without the expert training put into action by all agencies and associations, the results of the more than 740,000 acres that burned could have been much worse.

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There is no question ongoing fire training is critical to future prevention and suppression of the fires that are now a permanent part of California's landscape. The Governor's Blue Ribbon Commission report issued a year ago notes the complexity and diversity of the training of California's firefighters today.

The California Department of Forestry predicts that there will be more than 1 million new structures built in the wildland interface fire areas by 2,010. Enacting a comprehensive, continuing training and education structure that meets the needs of the disciplines within the fire service profession is sound public policy, especially, in light of the fact, that there is a national real estate trend toward people living in rural mountain and open space areas, where the spread of and containment of wild fires is of major concern.

For the above reasons, **PIFC supports AB 669** and urges your aye vote on this measure. If you have any questions, please contact Jerry Davies at (916) 442-6646.

cc: Assembly Member La Suer, Author
Art Terzakis, Consultant, Senate Governmental Organization Committee
Richard Paul, Senate Republican Caucus
Cynthia Bryant, Office of the Governor
Scott Reid, Office of the Insurance Advisor

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