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**June 2, 2022**

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
President Pro Tem  
California State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 205  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
State Capitol, Room 5094  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Bob Wieckowski  
Chair, Budget Sub-Committee on  
Resources, Environmental  
Protection, Energy and  
Transportation  
1020 N Street, Room 502  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker  
California State Assembly  
State Capitol, Room 219  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Budget  
Committee  
State Capitol, Room 6026  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Richard Bloom  
Chair, Budget Sub-Committee on  
Resources, Environmental  
Protection, Energy and  
Transportation  
1021 N Street, Room 8230  
Sacramento, CA 95814

#### **Regarding: Forest Health CEQA and NEPA Streamlining**

Dear Pro Tem Atkins, Senator Skinner, Speaker Rendon,  
Assemblymember Ting, Senator Wieckowski, and  
Assemblymember Bloom:

On behalf of the Mountain Counties Water Resources Association (MCWRA) I write to lend our support of the Administration's Trailer Bill Language proposal on Forest Health CEQA and NEPA Streamlining (as updated 05/31/2022), and encourage you to support and adopt this proposal as part of the 2022-2023 budget package. MCWRA has long recognized the significant threat that

wildfire has upon mountain county residents, infrastructure, and water and recreation resources. Moreover, when wildfire devastates the landscape of California's forested watershed, the impacts to our overall water system are felt statewide.

Recent catastrophic wildfires have originated on federally managed lands where fuels and forest management programs are slow to be implemented due to overlapping federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations.

Fuels and forest management programs on federal lands require compliance with NEPA and other federal laws but, because additional California State agencies have permitting authority on federal lands (e.g., State Water

Resources Control Board or CA Department of Fish and Wildlife), CEQA requirements also must be satisfied, requiring additional years of unneeded environmental and public review processes.

Streamlining and expediting forest fuels management projects on federal lands are critical to reducing and avoiding future catastrophic wildfires and protecting California's water supply. MCWRA supports the need for this CEQA exemption to eliminate the redundant and time-consuming CEQA environmental review process associated with fuels management programs on federally administered lands in California. Timely implementation of scientifically-sound forest management practices on the upper watershed, federally managed lands are critical to the ecosystem health, recreation economy, water quality and supply, infrastructure protection, and overall watershed functions.

MCWRA advocates for the water interests of its members in 12 of the mountain counties within the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) of woodland and forested lands in the Sierra Nevada. These foothill and mountain areas contain the headwaters for 40% of the state's developed water supply, which also provides for hydropower production, irrigation, recreation, water recycling, tourism, and instream flows that fuel the engine of our State's economy.

The health of California's forested watershed and its water resources is of critical importance to all Californians. We appreciate the Administration's support in streamlining efforts to engage in proactive forest management on California's federal lands.

Sincerely,



Justin Caporusso, Executive Director  
Mountain Counties Water Resources Association

c: Board of Directors, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association