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June 26, 2023

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The Honorable Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Chair, Assembly Water, Parks & Wildlife Committee
1020 N Street, Room 160
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SB 470 (Alvarado-Gil): Wildfires: Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program: Grant Eligibility: High Fire Hazard and Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones: SUPPORT

Dear Chair Bauer-Kahan:

On behalf of the Mountain Counties Water Resource Board of Directors, we write to lend our support to Senate Bill 470, which includes projects that reduce the risk of wildfire for communities through water delivery system improvements within the list of projects eligible for block grants from the Department of Conservation’s Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program. This legislation would provide much needed additional funding for wildfire defense and protection of rural communities.

California has experienced the deadliest and most destructive wildfires in its history in recent years. Fueled by drought and unprecedented buildup of dry vegetation and extreme winds, the size and intensity of these wildfires caused the loss of life, destroyed thousands of homes and structures, and exposed millions of urban and rural Californians to unhealthy air.

Support for projects that reduce the risk of wildfire must be increased in the high and very high hazard severity zones in order to protect property, resources, public facilities, infrastructure and, most importantly protect human life.

MCWRA advocates for the water interests of its 58 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.

Please feel free to reach out should you have any questions regarding our position.

Sincerely,

Scott Ratterman, President, Mountain Counties Water Resources Association