

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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KATHLEEN KRAUSE
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January 23, 2025

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

The Honorable Adam Schiff
U.S. Senate
SD-B40B, Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: H.R. 471 (Westerman), Fix Our Forests Act - SUPPORT

Dear Senator Padilla and Senator Schiff,

I am writing on behalf of the Kern County Board of Supervisors to express our strong support for H.R. 471, the *Fix Our Forests Act* and urge its prompt consideration and enactment into law. This bipartisan legislation offers significant advantages for Kern County by enhancing the ability to withstand devastating wildfires and protecting communities in the wildland-urban interface.

Wildfires continue to pose a prominent threat to Kern County. 2024 saw several major wildfires burn within the County including our largest on record. The Borel Fire, active within Sequoia National Forest, burned more than 59,000 acres and destroyed hundreds of structures. Prior to that, the County faced similar devastation during the 2016 Erskine Fire (over 47,000 acres burned) and the 2021 French Fire (over 26,000 acres burned).

The Kern County Legislative Platform calls for support for increased federal efforts to prevent and respond to wildland fires through local assistance and through active and robust fuel management programs aimed at promoting healthy forests. This priority highlights the crucial role that federal resources play in mitigating the growing wildfire risk in Kern County.

H.R. 471 makes important progress and offers invaluable tools to enhance the health of our forests, strengthen our at-risk communities, and establish enhanced partnerships with the federal government to improve overall safety in our County.

This bill was recently passed in the House of Representatives; therefore, the Kern County Board of Supervisors respectfully requests that you shepherd H.R. 471 through the Senate and urge its swift passage into law.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Leticia Perez", written over a circular stamp.

Leticia Perez, Chair
Kern County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Hon. Bruce Westerman, Chairman, House Committee on Natural Resources
The Hon. Scott Peters, Member of Congress