Executive Department
State of California

PROCLAMATION

BY THE GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

WHEREAS between 5,000 and 8,000 wildfires plague California each year, destroying property, taking lives and damaging our state's valuable watershed and precious natural resources; and

WHEREAS living in California implies a coexistence with the serious threat of wildfire; and

WHEREAS improving a home's resistance to wildfire and instituting a plan to leave early in a safe manner can dramatically increase the safety and survivability of the public and emergency personnel; and

WHEREAS California is privileged to have 85 million acres of wildland that serve as habitat for a diverse array of wildlife and plants and which contribute millions of dollars to the state economy through commercial timber harvesting, and provide residents and visitors unparalleled opportunities for recreation and enjoyment of nature; and

WHEREAS in California, every year has the potential for large, damaging fires to occur simply due to its Mediterranean climate, and

WHEREAS although heavy rain and snow fell in many parts of the state in the winter of 2010 and spring of 2011, California continues to recover from the effects of consecutive years of severe drought during the last decade; and

WHEREAS during the last five years, an annual average of 7,000 wildfires burned over 900,000 acres of California's timber and grasslands, releasing carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gasses into the atmosphere destroying forests, damaging habitat, and affecting biodiversity; and

WHEREAS severe wildfire impacts how watersheds provide clean and reliable water supplies that are critical to California's people, environment and economy; and

WHEREAS the risk of large wildfires that threaten or take lives and destroy homes, is predicted to rise by over the next several decades as a result of climate change; and

WHEREAS the United States Department of Health and Human Services and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that California fires and their smoke pose a number of health risks, including serious respiratory ailments, reaching far beyond the wildfire boundaries and can irritate human respiratory systems and worsen chronic heart and lung diseases; and

WHEREAS wildfire suppression costs only represent a small portion of overall economic impacts and do not reflect the total cost of large and damaging fires; and

WHEREAS indirect costs and losses, and post fire costs and losses can total 10 to 50 times the suppression costs;

WHEREAS the California Employment Development Department estimates that thousands of workers have been unemployed as a result of past wildfire disasters in California, prompting the need for immediate financial assistance; and

WHEREAS all Californians who live, work and recreate in our state must recognize the high risk of wildfire and must take every precaution to protect themselves, their property, and our natural resources; and

WHEREAS approximately 94 percent of wildfires in California are human-caused and, therefore, are preventable; and

WHEREAS Wildfire Awareness Week is an important opportunity for California's communities and fire service agencies to reduce the risk of wildfire and increase public safety and awareness through education on fire safety, preparation and prevention.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor of the State of California, do hereby proclaim May 1-7, 2011, as "Wildfire Awareness Week."

IN WITNESS WHEREOF I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of California to be affixed this 28th day of April 2011.

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor of California

ATTEST:

DEBRA BOWEN
Secretary of State