

**From:** Elizabeth Nielsen <enielsen@co.siskiyou.ca.us>  
**Sent:** Friday, March 17, 2017 8:23 PM  
**To:** CALFIRE Forest Climate Advisory Team  
**Subject:** Siskiyou County Comments - Draft California Forest Carbon Plan

Good Afternoon,

Siskiyou County, through its Natural Resources department, would like to provide the following comments regarding the Draft California Forest Carbon Plan (Plan). Siskiyou County has a keen interest in any plans or projects that address forest management, the impact of dead and dying trees in California, and the use of biomass facilities.

Active forest management is a critical piece of keeping forests throughout California environmentally healthy, economically viable, and free from catastrophic wildfire. Active forest management is the most important tool in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and lowering the threat and severity of wildfires, which is a substantial source of greenhouse gas emissions. Forest management provides for greater carbon benefits when compared to management practices which seek to set forests aside in reserves (Stewart, 2010). When forests are responsibly thinned and harvested, they provide biomass that can be chipped and utilized to produce energy. Siskiyou County is very supportive of any plans to approve and help fund biomass facilities, which are at great risk throughout California, as many of them are shutting down, leaving fewer options to deal with greenhouse gas issues and leaves local agencies without the needed avenues for disposing of removed trees. Please find attached a letter that Siskiyou County submitted to Governor Jerry Brown supporting Senate Bill 859, which outlined opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through options like biomass facilities.

A significant threat to forests throughout California is the millions of dead and dying trees that have ravaged areas like the Sierra Nevada's, and is moving its way north through the State. Several years of drought has allowed bark beetles to attack vulnerable trees and kill upwards of 100 million trees in California. Although not entirely eliminating the impact of bark beetles, if these forested lands had been better managed there would be significantly less dead trees, and there would have been a situation that could have been effectively managed by local, state and federal agencies. In 2010, it was estimated that there was an average of 400 trees per acre throughout the Sierras, where approximately 70 trees populated an acre prior to the Gold Rush. The sheer number of trees, and the resulting dead and dying trees, have caused safety hazards for the public and forestry workers, as well as has left standing fuels that are highly susceptible to wildfire. Forests can be less susceptible to drought and bark beetles by implementing structural changes through thinning and density management of forests. Thinned stands require less water and may be less vulnerable to water stress and insect outbreaks. Reduced fuels load in thinned stands can also reduce wildfire risk (Vose, 2015).

The Plan must outline steps and goals for addressing these issues and outlining on-the-ground work to address tree density, fuels load, and the dead and dying trees plaguing our forests throughout California. The Plan should also provide for state funding and regulatory relief in removing dead and dying trees, and actively managing our forests so that California is not faced with these forestry issues in the future. This regulatory relief should also outline the opportunity for it to extend federally, and be utilized by our federal agencies who have forestry management responsibilities, as 62 percent of all forested lands in California are under federal ownership. We would also like to note that Siskiyou County recently adopted a resolution and formed a Tree Mortality Task Force aimed at being proactive in addressing dead and dying trees, so that our County may not be impacted to the level of the Sierra Nevada's. Funding opportunities and regulatory relief would go a long way in meeting the goals that the Task Force has laid out for itself, and would provide huge benefits to not only our rural communities, but the State of California as well.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on this draft Plan, and will stay involved throughout its completion and implementation. Please add me to your contact list for this Plan and any other related planning efforts. If you have any questions or would like to discuss these comments or the Plan further, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

**Elizabeth Nielsen**

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Bibliography

James M. Vose, J.S. (2015). Effects of Drought on Forests and Rangelands in the United States-A Comprehensive Science Synthesis. U.S. Forest Service

Stewart, D.W. (2010). The Multiple Benefits of Managed Forests. California Forests, 340-364.

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