



County of Del Norte County  
Board of Supervisors  
981 "H" Street, Ste. 200  
Crescent City, California 95531

Phone  
(707) 464-7204

Fax  
(707) 464-1165

February 14, 2017

Attn: Forest Climate Action Team  
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

Transmitted via: [fcats.fire@fire.ca.gov](mailto:fcats.fire@fire.ca.gov)

**Re: Draft Forest Carbon Plan**

Dear Forest Climate Action Team:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Forest Carbon Plan. Del Norte County has reviewed the draft plan. Generally, we appreciate the draft's emphasis on addressing the unnaturally dense condition that our forest lands have been allowed to degenerate into through inactive management, the regional approach advocated for in the development of regional plans, and the recommendation to promote wood based products however we do reserve some concern relating, notably, to the draft's proposed actions to increase acquisitions and easements as a means to address the conversion of forest land.

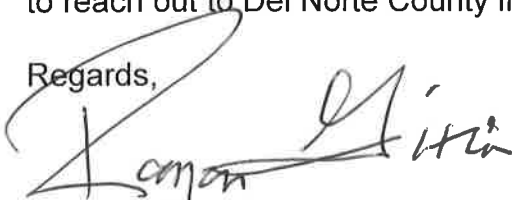
Del Norte County agrees with the finding of the Forest Climate Action Team (FCAT) that, today, many forests "are unhealthy, with unnaturally dense stands that lack resilience, making them more susceptible to drought, disease, insect pests, and uncharacteristically large, severe wildfires." The draft continues, "In fact, there is growing evidence that many of California's forests have become net emitters of carbon due primarily to the uncharacteristic fire and mortality we are witnessing. These events result in massive amounts of dead trees that are no longer removing carbon from the atmosphere and that will continue to emit greenhouse gasses for decades as they decay. The vegetation that replaces the trees that have died will not compensate for the carbon loss for decades (if ever; for example where forest converts to shrubs). Managing forests in California to be healthy, resilient net sinks of carbon is a vital part of California's climate change policy. Forested lands in the state are the largest land-based carbon sink, but recent trends and long-term evidence suggest that these lands will become a source of overall net greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions if actions are not taken to protect these lands and enhance their potential to sequester carbon." The County applauds the FCAT for proposing specific actions to reverse these trends. Namely, actions proposed that we support include significantly increasing the pace and scale of fuel reduction on nonfederal forest lands.

Moreover, the County agrees with the FCAT's recognition of the important role that federally managed lands play in achieving the State's climate goals. Similar to the rest of the State the majority of the forest lands in Del Norte County (69.3%) are managed by the Federal Government (U.S. Forest Service). We hope that the State's development of this plan spurs the Federal Government to address the regulatory obstacles to forest resiliency, namely procedural requirements in the federal environmental and planning statutes that hamper fuels treatment and other forest management techniques.

While the County is generally supportive of the draft Forest Carbon Plan, as written, the County does maintain concern with actions proposed in the draft that would increase easements by 10% above current levels as well as the proposed action to increase acquisitions. Nearly 80% of the total lands of Del Norte County are currently owned by either the State or Federal Governments (Source: Del Norte County Assessor's Office). This fact has had a severe and crippling effect on the ability of the County to fund services due to a loss of property taxes coupled with the State's continued inability to fully fund the Payment in Lieu of Taxes program which was established in 1949 to help local governments offset this form of loss of private lands. This Board is so concerned with this issue that it has, in fact, adopted a resolution (Del Norte County Resolution No. 2007-053) stipulating that the Board's position on acquisition is "no net loss" of private lands (see attached). As such, the County requests that consideration be given in the plan, perhaps in the form of a financial program, to off-set the loss of private lands in the jurisdiction in which acquisition is proposed.

We appreciate the multi-tiered approach that the plan proposes for addressing the role that forest lands play in achieving the State's climate goals as well as the encouragement to our Federal partners to consider their forest management practices however we do have some reservation with the draft as currently written, specific to easement and acquisition. We hope that you find our comments useful in finalizing the draft and we look forward to seeing the actions identified in the plan be implemented. Please continue to coordinate the development of the plan in consultation with local governments, particular rural counties, and do not hesitate to reach out to Del Norte County if we can assist in any way.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Roger Gitlin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "R".

Roger Gitlin  
Vice-Chairman, Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

CC: Senator Mike McGuire, California State Senate  
Assemblyman Jim Wood, California State Assembly  
Rural County Representatives of California

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
COUNTY OF DEL NORTE  
STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

**DEL NORTE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
RESOLUTION NO. 2007- 053**

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF DEL NORTE COUNTY  
REGARDING "NO NET LOSS" OF PRIVATELY-OWNED LAND  
DUE TO PURCHASE BY THE FEDERAL OR STATE GOVERNMENTS**

**WHEREAS**, the unique resources of Del Norte County have attracted and continue to attract substantial land acquisitions within the county by the federal and state governments; and

**WHEREAS**, the exemption of properties in the public domain from taxation has affected the budgets of local public agencies responsible for the delivery of public services; and

**WHEREAS**, the economy of our county and the way of life of our residents requires a balance between public and private sector resources and activity; and

**WHEREAS**, in excess of seventy percent of the territory of Del Norte County is already in public sector ownership; and

**WHEREAS**, in many cases, there are funds for the acquisition of property that are not accompanied by funds for payments in lieu of taxes, programs, management or even public access to the property; and

**WHEREAS**, pressure for additional federal and state acquisition of Del Norte County properties is likely to continue or increase; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors of our neighbor to the south, Humboldt County, has adopted Resolution 92-35, which calls for no net loss due to federal and state acquisitions, now, therefore,


**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Supervisors of the County of Del Norte goes on record as supporting a policy of "no net loss of privately-owned lands," coupled with the concept that the acquisition of land within this county by the federal or state governments, or by agents or organizations acting on their behalf, shall be offset by the sale of lands of equal or greater value to the private sector, so that the result is no net loss of local tax revenue from the transactions.

**PASSED AND ADOPTED** this 17 day of September, 2007, by the following polled vote of Board of Supervisors of the County of Del Norte:

AYES: Supervisors McNamer, Hemmingsen, Sullivan, and Finigan  
NOES: Supervisor McClure  
ABSENT: None

  
David Finigan, Chair  
Del Norte County Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

  
Sherri Adams,  
Clerk of the Board of Supervisors