

Tuolumne County Farm Bureau  
77 N. Washington St.  
Sonora, CA 95370

3-16-17

Forest Climate Action Team

RE: Draft CA Forest Carbon Plan

Tuolumne County Farm Bureau is a non profit organization that is dedicated to protecting and promoting agriculture. We represent over 400 members locally, and are a part of the over 50,000 members of California Farm Bureau Federation. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft carbon plan.

I admire the attempt to tackle this issue, but frankly, this plan as presented is nothing more than an academic endeavor. There is no "plan" in the "plan." The document fails to recognize the severity of the crisis in which we are facing to our forests health. Decades of mismanagement have left our forests in a state in which it isn't a question if they burn, but rather when they burn. The plan talks about the need to treat 500,000 acres? Really? The scope of what needs to be treated immediately is in the millions of acres, and failure to recognize and address this renders this plan useless.

Our forests have been killed with kindness. I am going to say what no know seems to want to say, and that is that we have to start logging our forest again. Not just thinning, or managing, or reintroducing fire, we have to have a large scale and comprehensive logging plan for the federal land and private land. It will only be after we aggressively manage the forest that fire can be reintroduced to create a condition similar to 100 years ago.

Much of the blame for the catastrophic fire of the last 30 years lies solely on the Federal Government's lack of management on the National Forest. They need to have a robust and guaranteed level of harvest that is secure enough for private industry to expand and create new processing plants and infrastructure to handle forest products.

The state doesn't escape blame as we have the most stringent and costly forest practice rules in the nation. With depressed markets and a flood of salvage material, most small timberland owners can't even afford the expense of a timber harvest plan let alone manage their property.

Results of these policies are an increased fuel load that is ripe for a catastrophic fire. And then after a fire, groups do everything they can to halt salvage operations. Reports indicated that there will be as much carbon released from the decaying forest products after the fire than were released during the fire.

Two suggestions put forth in the draft are completely ridiculous. Increasing public transportation in urban areas does nothing for forest health, and having the state purchase timberland or participate in conservation easements is just as ridiculous. The state has no money, and as previously stated, government has no business in land management and has completely failed the people and forests of California with the timber land that they currently control.

The solution to this is simple and can be completed in just a few pages. We need to aggressively log and actively manage our timber land. You see, when a tree is cut down, what happens to the stored carbon? Nothing, it stays stored. When you turn that tree into a board?

Nothing it stays stored. When a fire burns the tree? Carbon is released. When a tree is left to decay in the woods? Carbon is released. Another fun fact is that a healthy, young, growing tree actively collects and stores more carbon than a large tree that is no longer growing.

Simply remove the larger, no longer growing trees from the forest and as much of the dead timber (before it decays) as possible. Then continue to manage the landscape on a sustained yield basis by using low intensity fire to manage brush and non-desired vegetation, grazing with cattle and other livestock, and replanting with young trees that will grow vigorously and store all the carbon we can throw at them.

Don't over complicate this. Our society has been doing that for decades and look where we are at? Our forests are on the brink of being lost. If you actually desire a successful outcome from this plan, you have to start by acknowledging the severity of the problem. Next is to realize the simple fix and have the intestinal fortitude to admit that we screwed up by doing nothing and that we need to start logging as that is the ONLY solution to start fixing this problem.

Sincerely,



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