

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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JON KENNEDY, DISTRICT 5



October 16, 2012

George Gentry, Executive Officer
Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Dear Mr. Gentry:

As you know, Assembly Bill X1 29 was approved by the California Legislature and signed into law on July 7, 2011, without the necessary two-thirds vote required by Article XIII A, section 3 of the California Constitution. The law established a fire prevention "fee" to pay for Cal Fire fire prevention services within the State Responsibility Area (SRA) and this "fee" is assessed on owners of habitable structures located in the SRA. On behalf of the citizens, property owners and tax payers of Plumas County, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors strongly opposes this illegal tax for a number of reasons, in addition to the constitutional grounds stated above.

For starters, Cal Fire has only a minimal fire prevention presence in Plumas County. Through the California Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management Agreement, most SRA lands within Plumas County are exchanged with the US Forest Service and this federal agency provides local wildfire fire protection. By this agreement, Cal Fire maintains primary responsibility, also known as Direct Protection Area or DPA, for only a fraction of the SRA lands within Plumas County. These SRA lands remaining under Cal Fire's DPA are located in the northernmost part of Plumas County and are served by the Cal Fire station in Westwood, located in neighboring Lassen County. It is unconscionable that the Cal Fire fire prevention "fee" be charged to all of Plumas County properties when no Cal Fire stations are located here, and when so few properties could receive any Cal Fire service or benefit.

Plumas County also has a long and successful history of fire prevention activities, in large part because we place great emphasis on *local* activities. We support an active and vibrant Plumas County Fire Safe Council. We boast many Firewise Communities. We have twenty autonomous local fire jurisdictions. All of these organizations play important roles in fire prevention. Together, they are instrumental in educating, encouraging and achieving defensible space around habitable structures and communities. These successes are the result of local fire prevention efforts, not the work of Cal Fire. The newly enacted fire prevention "fee" simply duplicates the great local fire prevention work that happens every day in Plumas County. Even worse, collecting this "fee" severely hampers these local efforts by making it more difficult for local efforts to raise funds and to continue this work.

In summary, the Plumas County Board of Supervisors hereby requests an exemption for each and every Plumas County property owner subject to the fire prevention "fee" established in accordance with Assembly Bill X1 29. Short of an exemption, this Board demands these moneys be returned to the local fire districts, Fire Safe Councils, and Firewise Community organizations where Plumas County residents have invested considerable time, effort and resources while achieving measureable results.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Meacher". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Robert" being the most prominent.

Robert A. Meacher, Chair

Plumas County Board of Supervisors

Cc: The Honorable Jerry Brown, Governor
The Honorable Ted Gaines, California State Senate
Senator George Runner, Board of Equalization