July 22, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Vegetation Treatment Program
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Re: Support for the proposed statewide Vegetation Treatment Program

Dear Board Members,

As a member of the California State Assembly and representative of the Central Valley, I am writing to express support for the proposed statewide Vegetation Treatment Program.

Fire suppression practices have resulted in the unnatural buildup of fire fuel in many locations throughout the state of California. This program will substantially increase the pace and scale of vegetation treatments while lowering the risk of wildfires and contributing to California’s greenhouse gas reduction goals. Additionally, the program will improve ecosystem health in fire-adapted habitats by safely mimicking the effects of a natural fire regime using prescribed burns.

The implementation of the Vegetation Treatment Program will reduce the risk to life, property, and natural resources by managing our forests consistent with California’s 2018 Strategic Fire Plan.

Thank you for your consideration. Please call my office at 559-446-2029 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Jim Patterson
Assemblyman, 23rd District
July 30, 2019

Matt Dias, Executive Officer,
Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
1416 9th Street, Room 1506-14
Sacramento, CA, 95814

Re: CalVTP

Dear Mr. Dias:

I write in support of, and urge the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection to adopt the California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP).

Since the catastrophic North Bay wildfires of 2017 I have been heavily involved in legislative efforts to advance the cause of wildfire reduction in our state. I was the author of SB 901, which among other things, amended state law to allow better forest management practices, and established a $1 billion allocation of funding over 5 years for CalFire to step-up vegetation management in high fire-threat districts. This year, I, and several of my legislative colleagues are authoring numerous bills pertaining to defensible space, community resilience, wildfire weather forecasting and more, all in an effort to reduce the risk of future wildfire catastrophes.

It is imperative that the wildfire prevention policies and programs approved by the Legislature and Governor Newsom be implemented efficiently and effectively. As we know all too well, the threat of wildfire is with us for most of each year. California must act now to protect life and property, natural resources, and the environment.

CalVTP is compliant with CEQA, and focuses on vegetation treatments designed to reduce the risk of destructive wildfires. CalVTP will assist in expanding statewide vegetation treatment activities up to 500,000 acres per year while providing a robust environmental analysis and project level mitigation measures.
I thank the Board for consideration of this request, and stand ready to assist the Board and CalFire to meet the challenge of wildfire risk reduction in California.

Sincerely;

BILL DODD
Senator, 3rd Senate District

Cc. Wade Crowfoot; Secretary, California Natural Resources Agency
    Rachel Wagoner; Deputy Legislative Secretary, Governor’s Office
    Thom Porter; Chief, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
    Tobias Halvarson; CalFire Legislative Affairs
July 31, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

To Whom It May Concern:

Extreme wildfire risk is becoming the new norm in California. Last year saw the largest recorded fire in California (the Mendocino Complex), and the deadliest and most destructive (the Camp Fire). Fire season is becoming a year-round problem. These wildfires cause significant damage to life and property, serious air quality problems and jeopardize California's ability to meet its climate goals. Many of the areas burned will suffer permanent ecological damage. California could end up with many of its forests becoming weeds and grasses because of these intense fires.

Across our state, bigger, more frequent and more intense wildfires are having significant health impacts and destroying our communities at an alarming rate. As these losses continue to mount, it has become clear that public and private partners need more tools to implement wide-ranging fire prevention programs in their communities. The California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP) is a California Environmental Quality Act-compliant program that would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency.

A combination of manmade and natural factors has resulted in drastic increases in economic losses, resulting from not only wildfire suppression, but also lost lives, homes and infrastructure. This crisis requires a statewide strategy. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off a statewide programmatic environmental impact report would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to timely address hazardous vegetative fuel and potentially reduce catastrophic losses.

The CalVTP provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire. I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the CalVTP.

Should you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact my office at (916) 319-2043.

Sincerely,

LAURA FRIEDMAN
Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
August 1, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
ATTN: Edith Hannigan, Board Analyst
CalVTP Comments
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Ms. Edith Hannigan,

I am writing today in support of the proposed California Vegetation Treatment Program (CalVTP). In October 2017, in my district, we lost more than 6,000 homes and 31 lives to the wildfires that devastated the North Bay. Unfortunately this was not an isolated incident. Across our state, bigger, more frequent and more intense wildfires are having significant health impacts and destroying our communities at an alarming rate. As these losses continue to mount it has become clear that public and private partners need more tools to implement wide-ranging fire prevention programs in their communities. The CalVTP would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency.

Our current approach to wildland management, in combination with our changing climate, has turned our natural landscape - an asset that should be our best weapon against climate change - into an untenable liability. The tens of thousands of acres that burn uncontrolled across our state every year cost us billions of dollars in firefighting costs and property losses, and simultaneously undermine the hard-fought carbon reductions we have achieved in California. This dynamic has reached a critical tipping point.

As the fires both in Southern California and in the North Bay so clearly demonstrated, these emergencies do not follow jurisdictional boundaries. A statewide PEIR for vegetation management will help jurisdictions implement projects that benefit communities regardless of geographical boundaries, and will place these individual projects within the larger context of fuel reduction work in California. Vegetation management conducted under the CalVTP would be part of a landscape-level strategy to reduce fire risk in California.

The CalVTP provides an essential avenue for communities to engage in fire prevention projects. The implementation of fuel reduction work has diminished in recent years, leaving communities in the wildland-urban interface vulnerable to wildfire. By opening a new path to CEQA compliance, the CalVTP provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire. I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the CalVTP.

Sincerely,

JIM WOOD
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, DISTRICT 2
August 1, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
ATTN: Matt Dias, Executive Officer  
VTP Draft PEIR Comments  
PO Box 944246  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Mr. Matt Dias,

As the size, frequency and intensity of wildfires across California increase, so too does the loss of life and property. As these losses continue to mount it has become clear that public and private partners need the ability to implement wide-ranging programs in their communities. The Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environment Impact Report (VTP PEIR) would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off a statewide programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to timely address hazardous vegetative fuel and potentially reduce catastrophic losses.

A combination of manmade and natural factors has resulted in drastic increases in economic losses, resulting from not only wildfire suppression but also losses of lives, homes and infrastructure. Much of this occurred during the 2018 fire season, when California experienced both the Camp Fire, with the most fatalities in California history, and the Mendocino Complex Fire, which became the largest fire in our state’s history. These and other fires result in increased costs to taxpayers, homeowners, utility ratepayers, and business owners. This precipitous increase in costs goes beyond jurisdictional boundaries and thus requires a statewide strategy. A statewide PEIR for a vegetation management program will help jurisdictions implement projects that benefit communities regardless of geographical boundaries, and will place these individual projects within the larger context of fuel reduction work in California. Vegetation management conducted under the VTP PEIR would be part of a landscape-level strategy to reduce fire risk in California. It is a level of planning and vegetation management that the state is currently in need of.

The VTP PEIR provides a much-needed avenue for communities to engage in fire prevention projects. The ability for implementation of fuel reduction work has diminished in recent years, leaving communities in the wildland-urban interface vulnerable to wildfire. By opening a new path to CEQA compliance, the VTP PEIR provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire. I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the VTP PEIR.

Sincerely,

Brian Dahle
Senator, 1st District
August 5, 2019

Mr. Matt Dias
Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 94246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Dear Mr. Dias:

California finds itself in the midst of a “New Normal,” with climate change and the historical use of fire suppression leading to increasingly destructive and deadly wildfires. In the last two years, Californians have witnessed record-breaking wildfires and the decimation of entire communities. The scope of this devastation requires community engagement and a statewide strategy to help mitigate these harmful effects.

The proposed California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP) will provide a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects to reduce hazardous, vegetative fuel conditions and improve the resiliency of our state’s ecosystems. CalVTP will achieve this while providing a robust environmental analysis as required by the California Environmental Quality Act to help ensure the protection of public trust resources.

More than 25 million acres of California wildlands are classified as under very high or extreme fire threat. Approximately 25 percent of the state’s population – 11 million people – lives in that high-risk area. For the many Californians at risk, I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire protection in the certification of CalVTP.

Sincerely,

MARC LEVINE

ML: dl
August 5, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
Attn: CalVTP  
PO Box 94246  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

To Whom It May Concern:

Climate change and fire suppression have led to larger, deadlier, and more destructive wildfires in California. The California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP) is a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-compliant program that would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency.

A combination of manmade and natural factors have resulted in drastic increases in economic losses, resulting from not only wildfire suppression, but also lost lives, homes and infrastructure. This crisis requires a statewide strategy. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off a statewide programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to timely address hazardous vegetative fuel and potentially reduce catastrophic losses.

The CalVTP provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire. I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the CalVTP.

Sincerely,

RANDY VOEPEL  
Assemblyman, 71st District
August 7, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

To Whom it May Concern:

Extreme wildfire risk is becoming the new norm in California. Last year saw the largest recorded fire in California (the Mendocino Complex), and the deadliest and most destructive (the Camp Fire). Fire season is becoming a year-round problem. These wildfires cause significant damage to life and property, serious air quality problems and jeopardize California's ability to meet its goals of a healthy environment. Many of the areas burned will suffer permanent ecological damage. California could end up with many of its forests becoming weeds and grasses because of these intense fires.

Across our state, bigger, more frequent and more intense wildfires are having significant health impacts and destroying our communities at an alarming rate. As these losses continue to mount it has become clear that public and private partners need more tools to implement wide-ranging fire prevention programs in their communities. The California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP) is a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-compliant program that would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency.

A combination of manmade and natural factors has resulted in drastic increases in economic losses, resulting from not only wildfire suppression, but also lost lives, homes and infrastructure. This crisis requires a statewide strategy. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off a statewide programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to timely address hazardous vegetative fuel and potentially reduce catastrophic losses.

The CalVTP provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire. I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the CalVTP.

Sincerely,

Andreas Borgeas
8th Senate District

Frank Bigelow
5th Assembly District
August 8, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
P.O. Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Re: Support for CalVTP as Proposed June 24, 2019

Dear Board Members:

Every year brings fresh evidence that the severity of wildfires is increasing, as buildups of vegetation provide more fuel for fires. In November 2018, the Camp Fire killed 85 people and destroyed over 18,000 structures in my district. In July 2018, the Mendocino Complex Fire burned nearly 720 square miles and destroyed 280 structures. In October 2017, the Tubbs Fire took 22 lives and destroyed 5,600 structures. With approximately 25% of the state’s population living in high fire-risk areas, this means that more people are at risk of loss of life or property due to wildfire than ever before.

While action is being taken to prevent the ignition of wildfires, the point remains that once fires are started, they often encounter far more fuel than our wildlands historically yielded and burn hotter, faster, and deadlier than ever before. In many cases, plants rely on naturally occurring fires to clear surrounding deadfall and reproduce. However, recent fires have burned hotter than ever before, killing trees that would normally flourish and scorching the earth to a point where it can no longer bond to itself, let alone support plant life.

One barrier to proper wildland management has been cumbersome environmental regulations for vegetation management projects. Under the current model, many vegetation management projects are sidetracked by the costs of going through the process and the length of time they can take to complete. I believe that CalVTP is a step in the right direction to address this issue. By streamlining the environmental review process and enabling local entities to conduct vegetation management projects, CalVTP would help protect our communities and significantly boost efforts to treat the State’s goal of 500,000 acres of wildland per year.

As the individuals and entities tasked with wildland management, we have a moral imperative to change the direction of the trend. As the representative of an area devastated by wildfire, I respectfully urge you to support CalVTP and help protect the people of this State.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request. If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact AJ Rossitto in my office at (916) 319-2003.

Respectfully,

James Gallagher
Assemblyman, Third District
August 8, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
ATTN: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

To Whom It May Concern:

As someone who has represented much of Northern California during my time in the State Capitol, and who has seen firsthand the crippling impacts of wildfires to communities both large and small, I strongly encourage the Board to accept the Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (VTP PEIR) and move forward with this critical program.

Communities that face catastrophic fires are often those which already have difficulty bearing the costs of state mandates and regulations. VTP PEIR will create a streamlined process that allows communities to work on prevention projects while also benefitting local ecosystems. Importantly, the ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off of a statewide PEIR would substantially reduce costs to communities to comply.

In 2017 and 2018, the state was faced with the clear evidence that wildfire suppression must become a statewide policy priority – not merely left to a handful of rural communities. The massive fires that we as a state faced did not limit themselves to jurisdictional boundaries; we should not limit our policy response to the same. A statewide PEIR will allow numerous governments and agencies to work across boundaries and create the impetus for a comprehensive, statewide vegetation reduction effort.

By opening a new path to CEQA compliance, the VTP PEIR provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire.

Sincerely,

JIM NIELSEN
August 8, 2019

J. Keith Gilless, Chair
Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Dear Chair Gilless:

Extreme wildfire risk is becoming the new norm in California. Last year saw the largest recorded fire in California (the Mendocino Complex), and the deadliest and most destructive (the Camp Fire). Fire season is becoming a year-round problem. These wildfires cause significant damage to life and property, serious air quality problems and jeopardize California’s ability to meet its climate goals. Many of the areas burned will suffer permanent ecological damage. California could end up with many of its forests becoming weeds and grasses because of these intense fires.

Across our state, bigger, more frequent and more intense wildfires are having significant health impacts and destroying our communities at an alarming rate. As these losses continue to mount it has become clear that public and private partners need more tools to implement wide-ranging fire prevention programs in their communities. The California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP) is a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-compliant program that would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency.

A combination of manmade and natural factors has resulted in drastic increases in economic losses, resulting from not only wildfire suppression, but also lost lives, homes and infrastructure. This crisis requires a statewide strategy. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off a statewide programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to timely address hazardous vegetative fuel and potentially reduce catastrophic losses.

The CalVTP provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire. I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the CalVTP.

Sincerely,

Mike Morrell
Senator, 23rd District

MM: trs
August 9, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

To Whom It May Concern:

California continues to face unprecedented threats from wildfires, due in no small part to a warming climate and altered precipitation patterns. As author of legislation that provides state and local authorities with needed tools to proactively manage vegetative landscapes for mitigating wildfire impacts, I recognize the importance of the California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP). Statewide programmatic environmental impact reports allow for agencies to tier and implement consistent projects with greater administrative efficiency and reduced costs.

I am pleased that CalVTP considers the unique treatment needed for the chaparral and coastal scrub ecosystems throughout my district. Central Coast and Southern Californian landscapes vary greatly from other California regions, and it is critical that agencies recognize these differences in developing program guidelines and implementing specific projects.

I request that the board continue to incorporate science-based information from experts and conservation groups when further developing and finalizing CalVTP, and that CalVTP ensures that projects tiered off of it are driven by the most up-to-date science, including science on the differences in mitigating wildfire potential in chaparral and coastal shrub landscapes, from forestlands that are more traditionally considered.

I also request that the board continue to consider all science and research from academic experts, researchers, and conservation groups that identifies techniques and practices that bolster wildland resilience while minimizing disturbance to habitats. We must act to prevent future wildfire risk, and I support CalVTP as a tool to do so, but we must also continue to review and incorporate science that conserve ecosystems and allow our landscapes to be naturally resilient to changing environmental conditions.

Sincerely,

Hannah-Beth Jackson
Senator, 19th Senate District
August 9, 2019

Board of Forestry and Fire Protection
Attn: CalVTP
PO Box 944246
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing to express my support for the development of the California Vegetation Treatment Program Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (CalVTP).

Extreme wildfires are becoming the new normal in California. Last year, California had both the largest recorded fire in the state’s history (the Mendocino Complex) and the deadliest and most destructive fire (the Camp Fire). Fire season is becoming a year-round problem. These wildfires cause significant damage to life and property, serious air quality problems and significant health impacts, and jeopardize California's ability to meet its climate goals. Many of the areas burned will suffer permanent ecological damage, and many of California’s forests could end up becoming weeds and grasses because of these intense fires.

Across our state, bigger, more frequent and more intense wildfires are destroying our communities and causing economic losses at an alarming rate. As these losses continue to mount, it has become clear that public and private partners need more tools to implement wide-ranging fire prevention programs in their communities. The CalVTP is a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)-compliant program that would create a streamlined process for communities to engage in prevention projects that would reduce hazardous vegetative fuel conditions and restore ecosystem resiliency.

This crisis requires a statewide strategy. The ability to tier the environmental analysis for these projects off of a statewide programmatic environmental impact report (PEIR) would substantially reduce costs to communities and allow them to address hazardous vegetative fuel in a timely manner and potentially reduce catastrophic losses. The CalVTP provides a framework for communities to plan and implement fuel reduction and ecosystem resiliency projects to protect their landscapes from wildfire.

For these reasons, I would like to lend my support to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection in the development of the CalVTP. Please contact my office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

CECILIA AGUIAR-CURRY
Assemblymember, 4th District