

CARMEL J. ANGELO  
Chief Executive Officer  
Clerk of the Board



**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO**  
**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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January 10, 2012

Mr. Stan L. Dixon, Chair  
State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
P.O. Box 944246  
Sacramento, CA 94244-2460

Re: Opposition to State Responsibility Area (SRA) Emergency Regulations

Dear Chair Dixon and fellow Board members:

On behalf of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to express our unanimous and continued opposition to the implementation of State Responsibility Area (SRA) emergency regulations and fire prevention fees as prescribed pursuant to ABX1 29.

The regulations and fee structure as proposed would result in double charges without any additional benefit to rural homeowners, placing a disproportionate share of cost on residents and businesses residing in rural areas throughout California. Rural homeowners are already paying taxes and/or assessments for fire protection services. As such, it is grossly inequitable to require that rural homeowners disproportionately bear the burden of fire protection and prevention activities that benefit all Californians. The fire prevention and protection services of Cal Fire benefit *all* Californian's, not just those who live in SRAs.

The recently revised regulations under consideration don't go far enough in recognizing the fees already paid to local fire protection entities, thereby exposing rural homeowners, property owners, and businesses to even greater financial inequity. Foremost on our minds, is the economic impact these fees will have on our constituents, and the potential challenges that will be faced by first responders in Mendocino County in handling calls for service.

Furthermore, implementation of the emergency regulations and associated fee would adversely impact our already struggling local emergency responders which has the potential of jeopardizing emergency response and the State's highly effective mutual aid system. Mendocino County was actively considering seeking voter approval to raise the funds necessary to sustain our rural fire services. This effort to secure critically needed funding has been abandoned because of the proposed SRA fee. Lack of additional funding will not only impede the ability of rural districts to respond to mutual aid and out of district calls, it will impair continued service within their district boundaries. The options of local jurisdictions working towards solutions will be severely limited. Imposition of the SRA fee will leave rural districts less able and less willing to respond to calls for service outside their district boundaries.

**THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

CARRE BROWN  
First District

JOHN MCCOWEN  
Second District

JOHN PINCHES  
Third District

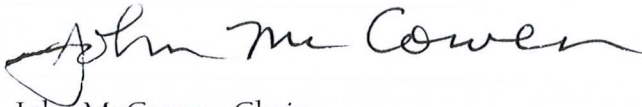
KENDALL SMITH  
Fourth District

DAN HAMBURG  
Fifth District

For the above-stated reasons, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors strongly urges you to reconsider the fee structure and emergency regulations thereby preventing the imposition of a disproportionate financial burden on rural California property owners and businesses which would further erode the already struggling economy of Mendocino County.

We also wish to renew our invitation to the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection, as communicated on December 23, 2011, to convene a public hearing in Mendocino County as your Board embarks upon the rulemaking process regarding the adoption of permanent regulations implementing State Responsibility Area (SRA) fees.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John McCowen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "John" and last name "McCowen" clearly legible.

John McCowen, Chair  
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: Mr. George Gentry, Executive Officer, State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection  
The Honorable Noreen Evans, Senator  
The Honorable Wesley Chesbro, Assemblymember  
Mendocino County Fire Chiefs' Association  
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)