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2ND DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0502

October 22, 2015

Dave Myers, Supervisor
Shasta-Trinity National Forest
3644 Avtech Parkway
Redding, CA 96002

Merv George, Supervisor
Six Rivers National Forest
1330 Bayshore Way
Eureka, CA 95501

Dear Mr. Myers and Mr. George:

I am writing in strong support of the Trinity County Collaborative's proposed Trinity Community Protection and Landscape Restoration Project (TCPLRP). After yet another devastating wildfire year in Trinity County, the need for this project is obvious; funding the proposal will help protect communities, watersheds and wildlife, and signal support for the collaborative stakeholders' impressive track record of coming to consensus on difficult issues.


Over the past 10 years, more than 300,000 acres has been burned by wildfires in the project area alone, costing some \$300 million to suppress. This year, 180,000 acres in Trinity County burned, costing \$90 million to fight. These frequent and often intense wildfires are a serious threat to public safety, causing evacuations, loss of private property, and significant damage to natural resources including endangered species, valuable fisheries, timber and drinking water sources.

The collaborative's efforts are a high priority. I have begun to host quarterly meetings with the collaborative and federal agencies to encourage prioritization and resource allocation to the proposed projects the collaborative has identified. Trinity County ranks among the poorest counties in California. Its land base is nearly 80 percent owned by the federal government, predominately by the U.S. Forest Service. A formerly strong timber industry was once key to regional employment and the economy, but that industry has dwindled, as has the amount of timber taken off Shasta-Trinity National Forest. At the same time, conditions on the ground make wildfire a major threat: overstocked plantations, dense understory along roads and near communities, and often untreated burned-over areas are among the least resilient to fire.

The TCPLRP consists of 11 projects with National Environmental Protection Act approvals or submissions in the South Fork of the Trinity River and Upper Mad River watersheds on the Shasta-Trinity and Six Rivers National Forests. The projects aim to establish and maintain fuel breaks in strategic areas, thin and decommission plantations near communities, reforest severely burned areas, reconstruct or decommission roads, and complete aquatic habitat restoration in wildfire areas.

To date, the collaborative has worked closely with partners to raise \$635,000 toward the project. Partners include Trinity County, the Trinity County Resource Conservation District, the Yurok Tribe, private timberland owners, and nonprofit organizations. Further contributions are expected over the three-year project period. I strongly urge you to consider funding the TCPLRP proposal and take an important step toward protecting the communities and resources of Trinity County. Please call my Eureka office at (707)407-3585 if you have questions.

Sincerely,


JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress

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