

# CALIFORNIA CATTLEMEN'S ASSOCIATION



## **California Wildfire Policy**

What has California done to address this ongoing crisis?

What's Left to do?

*Justin Oldfield*

*Vice President, Government Affairs*



# Wildfires

## Largest

Mendocino Complex Fire  
Colusa, Lake, Mendocino & Glenn Counties  
459,123 acres, 280 Structures, 1 Death

## Most Destructive

Camp Fire  
Butt County  
153,336, 18,804 Structures, 86 Deaths (12/12/2018)





# Legislative Response

Significant legislative response culminating with the passage of SB 901 (Dodd)



SB 901 (Dodd)

SB 1260 (Jackson)



# SB 901 (Dodd)

- Regulatory Relief
- Public Safety
- Funding



# SB 901- Regulatory Relief

- Requires conservation easements purchased with state funds to maintain & improve forest health
- Provides that timber removed as a result of a fuel reduction project conducted by, or in partnership with, a public agency or a nonprofit can now be sold
- Establishes a new Timber Harvest Plan exemption for landowners with less than 100 acres (5-year sunset)
- Increases the diameter of trees that can be removed to 30 and 36 inches within road prisms (5-year sunset)



# SB 901- Regulatory Relief (cont.)

- Provides CEQA exemption for prescribed burns, thinning, or fuel reduction on federal lands that have been reviewed under NEPA for projects conducted by state or local agencies
- Expands the THP Small Timberland Owner Exemption to allow the creation of defensible space 150-300 ft. around structures
- Authorizes advance payment up to 25% of a total grant to a nonprofit organization, local agency, special district, a private forest landowner or Native American Tribe (SB 1079)



# SB 901- Public Safety

- Requires utilities to adopt comprehensive fire prevention measures to “harden” infrastructure and prevent further wildfires
  - Plans must have measurable metrics
  - Requires the use of a independent evaluator to assess compliance
  - Must be approved by the California Public Utilities Commission
- Requires utilities to “de-energize” infrastructure under extreme wildfire threat conditions
  - Public process to develop notification protocols



# SB 901- Rate Payer Protections

- Requires CPUC to perform a “stress test” on a utility to ensure share holders pay as much as possible prior to forcing insolvency
- Financial liability will still be assessed on ratepayers by a court should PG&E declare bankruptcy





# SB 901- Rate Payer Protections (cont.)

- On Monday PG&E announced it will file bankruptcy
- 17 wildfires caused by PG&E infrastructure in 2017 including the Thomas and Tubbs fires
- Liability associated with fires in 2017 and those in 2018 concluded to be a result of PG&E infrastructure could exceed \$30 billion in liability
- How do we balance our need for electrification in rural areas with potential risk? Who should be held responsible?



# SB 901- Funding

- Appropriates \$1 billion for forest health, fuel load reductions & prescribed fire over five years
- \$200 million annually allocated from the State Budget
- Funds originate from the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund (GGRF) raised by Cap & Trade



# SB 901: FY 2019-2020 State Budget

- Governor announced his proposal to provide \$200 million for wildfire prevention efforts
  - \$165 million for healthy & resilient forests through landscape level work
  - \$35 million for prescribed fire
- \$120 million for aviation resources including the operation of 7 C-130s and the transition from Huey helicopters to Blackhawks
- \$64.4 million to expand firefighting capacity including 13 new engines/crews in high risk areas, expand the heavy equipment program and make 5 California Conservation Corp engines/crews permanent



# Forest Health Grants – CALFIRE

- Reforestation
- Fuel reduction and prescribed fire
- Pest management
- Biomass utilization
- Conservation easements through the Forest Legacy Program
- Research

**Applications Due January 29, 2019**





# Forest Health Grants – CALFIRE

## Eligible Applicants

- Local, state and federal agencies
- Native American tribes
- Private forest landowners
- Resource Conservation Districts
- Fire Safe Councils
- Land Trusts
- Non-profit organizations



# Additional Grant Opportunities - CALFIRE

- Urban & Community Forestry
- Fire Prevention
- California Forest Improvement Program
- Local Assistance for Tree Mortality
- Volunteer Fire Assistance



# SB 1260 (Jackson)

- Provide additional training for “burn bosses”
- Prescribed burns conducted in accordance with a burn plan sanctioned by CALFIRE will establish prima facie evidence that negligence was not a factor should fire escape
- Prior to SB 1260, CALFIRE’s role as a lead agency vacated any liability for the landowner. Under SB 1260, CALFIRE can now assess a portion of the liability on the landowner subject to an agreement by both parties



# Moving Forward





# 2019 – 2020 Legislative Session

- SB 901 Clean Up
- Various legislative proposals expected
- Additional regulatory reform
- Additional grazing opportunities?



# Questions

- Research
- What specific activities need to be funded?
- What additional regulatory relief actions need to be taken?
- Is there a coalition of the willing?

