

October 26, 2021

Dear Inyo and Mono County Supervisors:

We are a group of seven fire safe councils in Inyo and Mono Counties that has collaborated to bring this letter before your Boards in response to concerns about wildfire activity in and around our communities. We acknowledge and appreciate the attention paid to wildfire issues to date by the counties, including the recent enactment of fire restrictions, and would like to see further action.

Drought and extremely dry conditions in the Eastern Sierra have drastically increased the danger from wildfires over the last decade. The Tamarack Fire and Mountain View Fire are recent tragic examples. This heightened wildfire risk has prompted fire safe councils in the Eastern Sierra to join efforts in addressing this growing problem. We are looking to you, as our elected officials charged with the health and safety of the communities in each of your respected jurisdictions of Inyo and Mono Counties, to continue to assist in furthering fire safe policies, management, and advocacy.

The region's fire safe councils are seeking your help and cooperation to achieve the following objectives:

- 1) Inform and educate the public about current fire restrictions and wildfire risks and provide information on what the public can do to reduce fire risk in their communities and on public lands in the Eastern Sierra. The region's fire safe councils are ready to partner with local governments to provide information and projects to communities that raise awareness of fire safe practices and strategies.
- 2) Work with federal land managers to define and impose fire restrictions based on risk and fire conditions in specific, localized areas, instead of basing restrictions and warnings on general conditions over the entire Eastern Sierra. The large variations seen in the Eastern Sierra landscape make a more localized approach to assessing fire risks far more effective.
- 3) Collaborate with federal land managers and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to reduce the risk of human-caused wildfires, focusing special attention on the increased wildfire risk that has arisen with the increase in the number of dispersed campers in the Eastern Sierra. We ask that Supervisors pay particular attention to the wildlands immediately adjacent to our communities. This concern is being addressed by the Eastern Sierra Dispersed Camping Collaborative initiated by Mono County Supervisor Bob Gardner. The "Camp Like a Pro" campaign should continue to receive your support and should be expanded to include specific information and content about Inyo and Alpine Counties. Expanding the program to include signage at locations used by dispersed campers would be a logical next step.

These suggestions were generated over time as the region's fire safe councils interacted with concerned residents and through collaborative meetings with the Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Program and other fire safe councils in the region and across the state.

There are ten fire safe councils within the Eastern Sierra, representing Alpine County, Twin Lakes, Mono Basin, June Lake, Mammoth Lakes, Swall Meadows, 40 Acres, Wilkerson, Independence, and Lone Pine. A fire safe council is a volunteer community-based organization established to support and/or create programs and projects that will help create a fire-safe community.

The fire safe councils in the region have used several strategies to foster this goal: 1) promoting awareness of fire safe practices by providing information at community events, via social media, and using the news media and mailings; 2) enhancing the effectiveness of wildland fire fighting before a fire by supporting and implementing fuel-reduction projects; 3) seeking grants and other funds to aid in community fire safe projects and fire awareness activities; and 4) assisting in the creation of Community Wildfire Protection Plans.

We appreciate your consideration and will continue to work in our communities and with you, other agencies, local governments, and federal land managers to create fire safe communities and landscapes in the Eastern Sierra.

Sincerely,

Mono Basin Fire Safe Council

Mammoth Lakes Fire Safe Council

Wheeler Crest Fire Safe Council

40 Acres Fire Safe Council

Wilkerson Fire Safe Council

Independence Fire Safe Council

Lone Pine Fire Safe Council

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