

Northern California SAF

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June 9, 2004

The Honorable Wesley Chesbro
State Capitol, Room 5100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to SB 1648, as amended 5/24/04

Dear Senator Chesbro,

The Northern California Society of American Foresters (NorCal SAF) is in strong opposition to SB 1648, which aims to change the management direction of Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) to the detriment of the forest, the local people, and the people of California.

Current management on the forest is in fact sustainable along the triple bottom line – economic, ecological, and social. SB 1648 aims to “fix” something that, far from being broken, has been providing the benefits it was intended to provide. In the public scoping session held by the Board of Forestry (BOF) in Fort Bragg in February of 2004, it was noted that in the earlier “Timber Wars” JDSF had been held up as a model of how forests should be managed.

Locking up our forest resources at home while importing wood smacks of environmental imperialism. Locking up our forests denies our citizens the opportunity to create a forest that best meets our multiple needs of wood, water, wildlife habitat and, yes, timber production. The local public understands this, and at the BOF public scoping sessions, there was strong support for continued active management of JDSF. The proponents of SB 1648, however, care about aesthetics to the apparent exclusion of the economic and social importance of JDSF to Mendocino County.

Senator Chesbro, you have spoken about striking a balance, but that balance is not found in the language of this bill. Clearly its intent is quite simply to constrain timber harvesting as much as possible. A system that interprets Douglas-fir as young as 35 years old (based on CMAI) as “mature forest” is ridiculous. The arbitrary assignment of trees over 154 years old as part of a specially protected category has nothing to do with scientifically based reasoning. It does have everything to do with politics, specifically the politics of those who would shut down all timber harvesting here in California, and the consequences be damned.

NorCal SAF trusts the members of the Assembly Natural Resources Committee will do the right thing and vote in opposition to SB 1648. This legislation is a political attempt to gain what a few preservationists have not been able to gain through proper channels, through the revision of the forest's management plan. SB 1648 aims to lock up Jackson Demonstration State Forest to the detriment of the forest, the local population, and the people of California.

Sincerely,

Claralynn R. Nunamaker, Chair
Northern California Society of American Foresters

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Cc: Hannah-Beth Jackson, Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Doug LaMalfa, Vice Chair, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
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Ray Haynes
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Lois Wolk
John Laird
Loni Hancock
Paul Koretz
Sally J. Lieber
Dan Weldon, Executive Director, Forest Landowners of California
Gary Howard, President, California Licensed Foresters Association
Donn Zea, President, California Forest Products Commission
John Kessler, NorCal SAF Policy Chair

The Northern California Society of American Foresters, with approximately 800 members, is a unit of the Society of American Foresters with about 18,000 members. The objectives of the Society are to advance the science, technology, teaching, and practice of professional forestry in America, and to use the knowledge and skills of the profession to benefit society. The Society was established in 1900 and is the national organization representing all aspects of the forestry profession in the United States, including public and private practitioners, researchers, administrators, educators, and forestry students.