



County of Tulare

April 26, 2023

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The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
US House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: The Save Our Sequoias Act-SUPPORT

Dear Speaker McCarthy:

On behalf of the Tulare County Board of Supervisors, I write in strong support of the Save our Sequoias Act (SOS Act) which would protect, enhance, and restore our Giant Sequoia groves here in Tulare County.

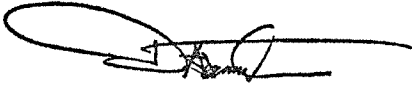
Tulare County is home to the vast majority of the 37,000 acres of Giant Sequoias available in the world. These ancient trees have survived several millennia only to be threatened by poor forest management practices over the last few decades. These practices have created a massive build-up of fuels in and around our Giant Sequoia groves. Although Giant Sequoias are naturally fire-resilient, this accumulation of fuel has led to unnaturally intense, high-severity wildfires that have destroyed nearly one-fifth of all Giant Sequoias on earth, in the last two years alone. With this expedited timeline of destruction, the very existence of our world-renowned Giant Sequoias is at risk.

Significant action to mitigate the danger of these wildfires through fuel reduction practices has been advancing at a snail's pace due to lack of resources, environmental resistance, regulation, and litigation. At its current pace, it would take the U.S. Forest Service approximately 52 years to treat just their 19 most at-risk Giant Sequoia groves. We need to take immediate action to secure the health and longevity of these groves. The SOS Act will provide land managers with the emergency tools and resources needed to save the remaining Giant Sequoias.

This bill will improve interagency coordination between Federal, State, Tribal, and local land managers through shared stewardship agreements. The SOS Act also establishes a comprehensive reforestation strategy to restore groves that have been lost to wildfire, and funds a new grant program to facilitate increased hazardous fuel reduction practices. All this will take place under an expediated processes provided by a declared emergency to codify existing emergency procedures, fast-track environmental reviews, while also maintaining robust scientific analysis.

The SOS will ensure that our Giant Sequoia groves are healthy and thriving for generations to come. For these reasons, I stand in strong support of the Save our Sequoias Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Townsend', with a large, sweeping loop at the beginning and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Dennis Townsend, Chairman
Tulare County Board of Supervisors

cc: Carpi & Clay Government Relations
Tulare County Federal Delegation