



ORANGE COUNTY FIRE AUTHORITY

P.O. Box 57115, Irvine, CA 92619-7115 • 1 Fire Authority Road, Irvine, CA 92602

Brian Fennessy, Fire Chief

(714) 573-6000

www.ocfa.org

March 20, 2023

The Honorable Doug LaMalfa
US Representative
408 Cannon House Office Building
Washington DC 20515

Subject: Support for HR 1586, Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023

Dear Representative LaMalfa:

I am pleased to let you know that the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) supports your bill HR 1586, Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023. I appreciate your leadership on this critical issue and am grateful that the legislation has received strong bi-partisan support.

The use of retardant is a vital tool that our firefighters need to have at their disposal. Providing a Clean Water Act exemption so that federal, state, local, and tribal firefighting agencies can continue to use fire retardant is necessary to keep this tool available. Our fire-prone communities are at risk every year from the threat of wildfire. The use of retardant when deemed necessary by highly trained and experienced Incident Commanders is critical for the survival and safety of not only our firefighters, but also the very communities and residents they are sworn to protect. I have seen time and again that using retardant slows the spread of fire, protects homes, saves infrastructure, and keeps communities safe by creating a boundary line of attack for fire crews.

It is imperative that we maintain our ability to fight wildfires effectively. Limiting our ability to do so will harm forest conservation, threaten endangered species, imperil historic site preservation, and impede our ability to protect residents. In short, we need this tool to protect critical infrastructure and human life.

I support your efforts on HR 1586.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brian Fennessy", is written over a large, stylized blue flourish.

Brian Fennessy
Fire Chief

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