



March 15, 2023

The Honorable Doug LaMalfa
United States House of Representatives
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman LaMalfa:

The Placer County Water Agency (PCWA) writes in support of H.R. 1586, the Forest Protection and Wildland Firefighter Safety Act of 2023 to create a Clean Water Act exemption for federal, state, local, and tribal firefighting agencies to use fire retardant to fight wildfires. This bi-partisan legislation will safeguard that aerial fire retardant remain a critical means in our firefighting toolbox for protecting our communities, forests, critical water and energy infrastructure.

PCWA understands first-hand the ability for immediate application of aerial fire retardants, dropped from air tankers and helicopters, to halt the spread of life-threatening wildfires in a wildland-urban interface.

- In August 2021, the River Fire started at the Bear River Campground west of Colfax, California, while the region was under a Red Flag Warning due to weather and forest fuel conditions that could result in extreme wildfire behavior. Aggressive deployment of aerial attack assets (over 24 aircraft and helicopters) employing targeted retardant and water drops was able to halt the spread of this destructive wildfire and protect thousands of structures and lives.
- During September and October 2022, the Mosquito Fire consumed over 76,000 acres in the American River watershed and threatened to destroy the communities of Foresthill and Georgetown and potentially spread into the Lake Tahoe Basin. Utilizing of aviation assets for frequent water and retardant drops protected at-risk communities and critical water and energy facilities, including PCWA's Middle Fork and Oxbow powerhouses.

Again, PCWA strongly supports the passage of H.R. 1586 which recognizes the vital importance of retaining the ability to use fire retardant to fight wildfires. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please contact me at (916) 624-0640.

Sincerely,

PLACER COUNTY WATER AGENCY

Anthony L. Firenzi, PE
Director of Strategic Affairs