



Board of Supervisors

RECEIVED

SEP 19 AM 11:24

CLERK OF THE BOARD
COUNTY OF ORANGE
Memorandum

Date: 9/19/2025
To: Robin Stieler, Clerk of the Board
From: Chairman Doug Chaffee, Fourth District
Vice Chair Katrina Foley, Fifth District
Re: Supplemental Item for the 9/23/2025 Meeting of the Board of Supervisors

Doug Chaffee
NA for KF

334E

Please place a supplemental item on agenda for the 9/23/2025 meeting of the Board of Supervisors to take a **support** position on S. 1462 – Fix Our Forests Act.

Background: On Wednesday, September 17, 2025 the Office of United States Senator Alex Padilla requested that the County of Orange support S. 1462, the Fix our Forest Act, which is bipartisan legislation authored by U.S. Senator John Curtis (R-Utah) and coauthored by U.S. Senators John Hickenlooper (D-Colorado), Tim Sheehy (R-Montana), and Alex Padilla (D-California). This agenda staff report was developed in consultation with the County Executive Office of Legislative Affairs.

Reason for Supplemental: The authors anticipate the legislation to be scheduled for committee hearing prior to the October 14, 2025 meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

Summary: According to the authors, California, along with the broader American West, has long been prone to wildfires, but prolonged drought and the buildup of dry fuels have increasingly intensified fires and extended fire seasons. Wildfires today are more catastrophic — growing larger, spreading faster, and burning more land than ever before. This increasing trend is seen in California, which averages more than 7,500 wildfires a year.

Not including the recent Los Angeles fires, 6 of the top 10 most destructive fires, 3 of the top 5 deadliest fires, and all the state's 9 largest fires have burned since 2017. The status quo is unsustainable, and addressing the scale of the crisis is essential to keeping California communities safe.

To address these challenges, the *Fix Our Forests Act* would:

- **Establish new and updated programs** to reduce wildfire risks across large, high-priority “firesheds,” with an emphasis on cross-jurisdictional collaboration.
- **Streamline and expand tools for forest health projects** (e.g., stewardship contracting, Good Neighbor Agreements) and provide faster processes for certain hazardous fuels treatments.
- **Create a single interagency program to help communities in the wildland-urban interface** build and retrofit with wildfire-resistant measures, while simplifying and consolidating grant applications.
- **Expand research and demonstration initiatives** — including biochar projects and the Community Wildfire Defense Research Program — to test and deploy cutting-edge wildfire prevention, detection, and mitigation technologies.
- **Strengthen coordination efforts across agencies** through a new Wildfire Intelligence Center which would streamline the federal response and create a whole-of-government approach to combating wildfires.
- **Improve reforestation, seedling supply, and nursery capacity**; establish new programs for white oak restoration; and clarify policies to reduce wildfire-related litigation and expedite forest health treatments.

Legislative Platform: S. 1462 aligns with the Legislative Platform approved by the Orange County Board of Supervisors.

Infrastructure & Environmental Resources-23: Fire Protection: “Support enhanced funding for fire prevention and hazardous fuel removal projects in state responsibility lands and ensure local agencies/landowners have access to these funds. Support funding for local agencies to prepare park lands and facilities for wildfire prevention, mitigation, and extinguishment and to assist local agencies in repairing and restoring fire-damaged property and recreational amenities.” Page 31.

Recommended Action Item:

1. SUPPORT – S.1462 (Curtis) Fix our Forests Act