



The Honorable Isaac Bryan, Chair
 California State Assembly
 Committee on Natural Resources
 [REDACTED]
 Sacramento, CA 95814

submitted via email

RE: AB 2494 (Rogers) – Oppose

Dear Chair Bryan and Members:

The organizations identified herein write in respectful opposition to Assembly Bill 2494, which would significantly alter the mission, funding structure, and management framework of California's demonstration state forests. While we share the goal of maintaining healthy and resilient forests, this bill would undermine the science-based management model that guides California's demonstration forest system and could jeopardize both the financial stability of these forests and the research and forest health work they support.

AB 2494 jeopardizes the financial stability of the demonstration forest system

California's demonstration forests are currently supported through a dedicated funding structure in which revenues generated from forest products and recreation are deposited into the Forest Resources Improvement Fund and reinvested directly into the operation and management of these forests.

AB 2494 would shift these revenues into the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund, where demonstration forests would compete with numerous other statewide priorities. Because the fund prioritizes regulatory and programmatic functions first, support for demonstration forests would be pushed to a lower priority tier. This change creates significant uncertainty about whether the forests will have the reliable funding needed to maintain infrastructure, support research programs, and carry out forest health projects.

The demonstration forest system was designed to be largely self-supporting through responsible forest management. Removing that funding stability places the entire system at risk.

The bill relies on a recreation-based funding strategy that CAL FIRE is not equipped to implement

AB 2494 assumes that expanded recreational use could replace or offset lost revenue from sustainable timber management. However, the mission and expertise of the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) is forest management, wildfire protection, and forest health—not the development and operation of recreation systems comparable to those managed by the California Department of Parks and Recreation.

Demonstration forests provide recreation opportunities today, but they are not state parks and were never intended to be managed primarily as recreation destinations. Attempting to replace a forestry-based funding model with recreation revenue introduces substantial risk without a clear path to financial sustainability.

AB 2494 discards modern fire science-based management work and research at Jackson Demonstration State Forest

California's demonstration forests function as working forests and research laboratories where scientists from state institutions like the University of California, Cal Poly Humboldt and state agencies and foresters test management approaches that improve forest health and wildfire resilience. At the Jackson Demonstration State Forest, for example, research has produced detailed management plans and long-term monitoring programs focused on redwood forest ecology, regeneration, and watershed protection. It is the only demonstration forest with a focus on redwood protection.

By redefining forest management priorities and sharply restricting timber harvest, AB 2494 would effectively discard years of planning, monitoring, and adaptive management work that is already underway, including tribal co-management efforts through a recently established management committee.

Forest science demonstrates the importance of active forest management

AB 2494 minimizes the role of sustainable timber harvest and silviculture in maintaining healthy forests. Demonstration forests were created to show how forests can be actively managed to achieve multiple objectives—including timber production, habitat protection, watershed health, and wildfire resilience.

Timber harvest in these forests is not arbitrary extraction. Harvest plans are developed by Registered Professional Foresters licensed by the California Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and must comply with the rigorous requirements of the California Forest Practice Act and the state's Forest Practice Rules. These plans incorporate the science of silviculture to guide thinning, regeneration, and stand management treatments that improve long-term forest health.

A substantial body of peer-reviewed research supports the role of active forest management in reducing wildfire risk and improving forest resilience.

Research conducted at the Blodgett Forest Research Station, operated by the UC Berkeley Center for Forestry, has demonstrated that forests treated with thinning and fuel reduction treatments experience significantly lower wildfire intensity and improved ecological recovery compared to untreated stands. South Lake Tahoe may have burned down without those forest treatments.

Similarly, the U.S. Forest Service and the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station studies show that reducing stand density and ladder fuels lowers the probability of high-severity crown fire. Research associated with the Sierra Nevada Adaptive Management Project has further demonstrated that thinning and managed harvest can improve forest structure, increase drought resilience, and reduce wildfire risk while maintaining ecological values.

These findings are reinforced by the widely cited 2009 forest science synthesis led by Malcolm North, which concluded that restoring resilient forest conditions in California often requires active management treatments that reduce excessive stand density and fuel loads.

Wildfire outcomes across California demonstrate the importance of these practices. Following large fires such as the Rim Fire, previously treated areas frequently experienced significantly lower fire severity than untreated forests, illustrating how proactive forest management can change fire behavior on the landscape.

Sustainable forestry also supports long-term carbon storage

AB 2494 emphasizes carbon storage as a rationale for restricting timber harvest. However, a growing body of forest science demonstrates that sustainably managed forests can play a critical role in long-term carbon sequestration. When trees are harvested as part of a sustainable forest management cycle, the carbon stored in those trees is transferred into durable wood products—such as structural lumber and mass timber—that can store carbon for decades or even centuries. In fact, The Governor’s Wildfire and Forest Resilience Taskforce supports the Joint Institute on Advanced Wood Products, which is specifically tasked with finding new supply streams to capture long term carbon storage through the co-beneficial action of timber harvest and fuels mitigation. AB 2494 erodes the work of the Governor’s Taskforce and the Joint Institute, sending the exact wrong signals to private industry that is necessary to establish California wood products supply chains.

At the same time, silvicultural treatments that reduce stand density allow remaining trees to grow more rapidly and continue absorbing atmospheric carbon dioxide. In contrast, forests that accumulate excessive fuel loads face a significantly higher risk of high-severity wildfire. When catastrophic wildfire occurs, large amounts of stored carbon are rapidly released into the atmosphere through combustion and post-fire decomposition.

Studies conducted by the U.S. Forest Service and research programs such as those at Blodgett Forest Research Station show that actively managed forests can maintain lower wildfire emissions and greater long-term carbon stability than forests where fuel accumulation leads to large, high-severity fires. In this context, *responsible timber harvest is not the loss of carbon storage—it is part of a carbon management strategy that stabilizes forest carbon while reducing the risk of sudden carbon release from wildfire.*

Removing silvicultural tools undermines forest health and rural safety

By restricting timber harvest primarily to narrow restoration circumstances, AB 2494 effectively removes one of the most important tools available to forest managers.

Silviculture relies on a range of treatments—including thinning, selective harvest, and regeneration management—to maintain resilient forest structure.

Eliminating or severely limiting these tools risks moving California toward an outdated “hands-off” management approach that decades of research have shown can lead to overly dense forests, higher fuel loads, and more destructive wildfire behavior.

For rural communities located near these forests, the consequences are significant. Overgrown forests with excessive fuels increase the likelihood of large, high-severity wildfires that threaten lives, property, and local economies. These wildfire risks are increasingly reflected in California’s insurance market, where catastrophic fire risk is driving policy non-renewals and rising premiums.

Demonstration forests serve a distinct and important purpose

California’s demonstration forests were established as working forests where sustainable forestry practices could be researched, demonstrated, and improved. They are not intended to function as state parks, nor should they be managed in a way that eliminates the core forestry practices they were created to study.

The existing system integrates forest management, scientific research, education, and recreation in a balanced way. AB 2494 would disrupt that balance by removing key management tools, destabilizing funding, and redefining the mission of these forests in ways that could undermine both forest health and wildfire resilience.

For these reasons, **our large and diverse coalition must oppose AB 2494.**

Sincerely,



Peter Ansel
Director, California Farm Bureau



Matt Dias
President and CEO, Calforests



Chris Chase
Director, Hearst Forests



Cole Humphrey
President, California Licensed Foresters



Eric Carelson
Associated California Loggers



Estelle P. Clifton
President, Mendocino County Farm Bureau



BJ Burns
President, San Mateo County Farm Bureau



Tim Chiala
President, Santa Clara County Farm Bureau



Don Munk
President, Napa County Farm Bureau



Jeff Mason
President, Humboldt County Farm Bureau



Ryan Walker
President, Siskiyou County Farm Bureau



President, Shasta County Farm Bureau



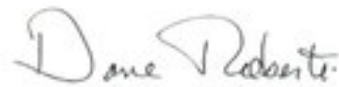
Janet Rabo
President, Tehama County Farm Bureau



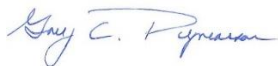
Dan Dresselhaus
President, Trinity County Farm Bureau



Danielle Linder
CEO, Jefferson Resource Company



Dave Roberti
President, Plumas-Sierra Farm Bureau



Gary Rynearson
Chairman, The Buckeye Conservancy



John Pisturino
President, Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau



Mark Pugsley
Manager, Gualala Redwood Company



Colton Gaiser
President, Tuolumne County Farm Bureau



Walt Hardesty
President, Sacramento County Farm Bureau



Rosemary Giannini
President, Calaveras County Farm Bureau



Jim Spinetta
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Kelly Fogarty Tilma
President, Stanislaus County Farm Bureau



Katie Bielen
President, Nevada County Farm Bureau



Brian Greathouse
President, Yuba-Sutter County Farm Bureau



Daniel Suenram
President, Lake County Farm Bureau



Rob Miller
President, Del Norte County Farm Bureau



Shawn James
President, Butte County Farm Bureau



Micah Rojas
President, Lassen County Farm Bureau



Sean Curtis
President, Modoc County Farm Bureau



Michael Ranalli
President, El Dorado County Farm Bureau



Jocelyn Maddux
President, Placer County Farm Bureau



Kelvin Williams
President, Mariposa County Farm Bureau



Carl Mathews
Mathews Skyline Logging



Joe Smailes
President, Forest Landowners of California



Ken Pimlott
Director, CALFIRE (retired)



Staci Heaton
Senior Policy Advocate, RCRC



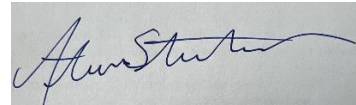
Clint Doucette
Manager, Redwood Empire



Zachary Jones
Manager, Redwood Timber Co.



Jacob Harrower
President, Association of Consulting Foresters



Annie Fehrenbach
California Women in Timber

cc: Members, Assembly Committee on Natural Resources
Republican Assembly Caucus Consultant

RE: AB 2494 Information

From Matt Dias [REDACTED]

Date Fri 3/20/2026 9:49 AM

To bos <bos@mendocinocounty.gov>

 2 attachments (1 MB)

AB 2494 (Rogers) Calforests OPPOSE 3-16-26.pdf; Final AB 2494 CAFB Oppose Asm Natl Resources COALITION LETTER.pdf;

Caution: This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Good morning, CEO Antle, Chair Norvell, and Supervisor Williams, Haschak, Williams and Mulheren,

At your coming Board of Supervisors meeting it is my understanding that there will be discussions regarding the potential development of a position statement for various legislation, including [AB 2494 \(Rogers\)](#) (Agenda Item R12). As I am sure you are aware, this are growing coalitions of Support and Opposition for on AB 2494, and I can only imagine that your Board is under scrutiny to take a position of Opposition on this legislation.

For purposes of clarity and transparency, I represent [Calforests](#), and our association is currently in deep Opposition of the bill as introduced. Calforests is also engaged in the legislative process and working in good faith to offer amends to the legislation that would better align with the vision of many in California as it relates to the CAL FIRE Demonstration State Forest Program, rather than simply staunchly opposing. As a means of background, I have worked in the forestry and wildfire space my entire career, which includes both public service, consulting, and working in industry.

My concern, as it relates to the pending decision before you is that the information that you have on the impacts, or benefits, may be quite scant at this time. I would like to offer that this process is happening quite quickly, and taking some deliberate actions to better inform the Board as to the impacts of the initiative would likely prove valuable. In the spirit of allow a deeper and well informed decision on the matter, it is my understanding that resources are available to the Board. The County of Mendocino does indeed have the opportunity to call upon technical staff to provide input on decision making, most notably, Mendocino County Forester (by agreement) with UC Cooperative Extension. I would respectfully contend that technical support from UN Cooperative Extension could be quite useful in this decision-making process as the UN ANR team is often quite aware and engaged in forest management, forest research, permitting and environmental compliance, land use, jurisdiction matters, tribal co-management, and recreation.

In addition, I wanted to offer a copy of just a couple of the comment letters that have been prepared and submitted to date that will provide some level of detail on some of the intricacies associated with this pending legislation. I am happy to serve as a point of consultation on this effort as well should additional outreach be deemed necessary by the Board.

I very much appreciate any consideration of this request as well as the the attached information.

With respect,

Matt Dias
President/CEO
California Forestry Association.



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March 19, 2026

Supervisor Bernie Norvell

Supervisor Maureen Mulheren

Supervisor John Haschak

Supervisor Madeline Kline

Supervisor Ted Williams

Email: bos@mendocinocounty.gov

Address: Mendocino County Supervisors, 501 Lw Gap Rd., Room #1090, Ukiah, Ca.95482

Dear Supervisors,

I am writing this letter on behalf of numerous Board members of the Redwood Practical Shooters (RPS), a non-profit 501(C)(3) educational organization, to voice our **OPPOSITION** to **AB2494**. For over 25 years the Club that we are members of have taught gun safety, offered New Shooter Safety Classes, and have given State-approved Concealed Carry Weapon Classes. And our Club is still very active.

Jackson State Demonstration Forest was established in the year 1947. It was created for public recreation and to be an experimental forest with logging practices that fund its forests and road maintenance, etc. This logging also immensely supports the Fort Bragg Community and Mendocino County.

RPS feel that we are stewards of this land. We have numerous documented days of clean-up in Jackson State Forest, sometimes with CalFire and the local bicycle group. Lots of garbage removed!

We love and appreciate this forest. We like the concept of its original creation with it being sustained by logging and not by money from our state budget or other accounts that have been spiraling downwards.

We appreciate your consideration of our views. If you want further information, contact me: Secretary, Jan Saari, [REDACTED]. Members of the RPS Board that

opposes AB2494: President: Luke Peterson

Vice President: Daryl Fink

Treasurer: Cindy Woods

Secretary: Jan Saari

Head Safety Officer: Ken Dexter

Head Range Officer: Ed Davies

RPS Board members: Russ Saari(F.B.FireDept.-50yrs.) Ansel Brandon, Marco Innocenti, and retired Sheriff Don Miller

Honorable Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

I am writing you today concerning State Assembly Bill 2494 and its mandate to shift management of our State Forests away from sustainable timber harvesting demonstration and research. With particular attention to Jackson Demonstration State Forest the largest of our State Forests here in Mendocino County. I have some knowledge regarding the management of this 50,000-acre State Forest since I devoted my career nearly 30 years working there and my father-in-law's work dates back to the mid 1950s near the inception of this State Forest.

The UDJ article states Assembly member Chris Rogers describes the legislation in a press release as ***“shifting the management of the forest away from industrial commercial timber production and towards ecological restoration, climate resilience and Tribal co-governance”***. First of all, when the state acquired Jackson State Forest around 1947 much work needed to be done after the tractor logging and road building of the era. Since that time the state forest has been managed by a long line of ethical Forest Managers and staff who systematically restored the watersheds, fisheries, and sustainable harvest of timber products while rehabilitating watersheds. I have witnessed this work for the last 40 years and devoted my career to it. We who worked on the State Forest here are the true environmentalists.

I think Supervisor Williams you have it all backwards as quoted in the UDJ article: ***“Like many rural communities, Mendocino County is struggling. As we transition away from an economy that relies primarily on extractive industries, which no longer provide sustainable support for our residents, we must expand opportunities for revenue and job creation. By directing the state to manage demonstration forests for public access, tribal co-management, climate resilience, and biodiversity, we can attract additional user groups such as mountain bikers, mushroom foragers, hikers, birdwatchers and others to help steward our public lands and support resilient rural economies.”***

There is a lot to unpack here but let's start with transitioning away from an economy that relies on extractive industries. If you don't live in a cave then this statement is just silly. Providing good quality lumber products locally reduces green-house gasses, provides good paying jobs and reduces the dependence on lumber extracted and transported from Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. Sustainable logging pays for ecological restoration including fisheries another industry that depends on healthy Salmonid populations. How do we learn about and pay for watershed restoration (not by eliminating the self-funding sustainable source). How do you propose to provide sustainable support for our residents and expand revenue and job creation? Jackson State Forest has sustainably harvested high-quality timber products while supporting good paying government jobs, and our rural communities with logging companies, trucking, fishing, heavy equipment operators doing the restoration of watersheds by decommissioning legacy roads. Those are the jobs that sustain a rural community. The State Forest only logs sustainably so where is the need to eliminate it? It is by definition a sustainable

industry and has been since the State took it over. I have worked under 4 State Forest Managers over 30 years and all of them kept the values you state in the legislation as being needed. Public Access is already present on the State Forest and anyone can use it.

As for additional user groups, I recreate on the State Forest now that I am retired. I am a hiker, mountain biker, mushroom forager and birder. All those recreation activities are free, there are no charges to use the state forest except camp grounds and mushroom permits. It's the best deal in the state, no entry or parking fees etc. I just went for a 9-mile hike at Van Damm State Park last week. The March storms decimated a section of the road along Fern Canyon knocking out bridges and eroding portions of the road. How long will it take to repair those damages from that one storm? It may take a year or more, that's the reality when "other recreational user groups" are the major income for a State Park.

Jackson State Forest along with the other smaller State Forests in California are a gem to be protected and cherished. It sustains our way of life in a world that no longer makes sense. There are about 300 miles of roads on our State Forest with many of those poorly located legacy roads decommissioned during timber harvesting. I was involved in many road removals during my career. It's hard work and expensive but well worth the effort for watershed and fisheries restoration.

All those attributes that are mentioned in this new legislation have been practiced on Jackson Demonstration State Forest you only need to ask the staff. Get your boots on Ted Williams and walk a few miles in my shoes. I would be happy to show you what I accomplished in my career on the State Forest. The most important thing the forest can do is promote its work, its wonderful environment, educational opportunities and research. This legislation will only serve to hinder the important work that's currently happening and actually hurt the environment and our rural economy.

Julie Bawcom

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