
Jackson State

From Steve Arkelian [REDACTED]

Date Fri 3/13/2026 6:09 AM

To bos <bos@mendocinocounty.gov>

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Good morning,

My name is Steve Arkelian and I have already contacted you regarding assembly bill 2494 that is based and written on emotions alone from people that don't even know how to drive to Jackson State Forest. They're fueled by the emotions of citizens who lack common sense on economics and science.

I won't go over my opposition to the bill again because I already have. I'm hoping you, as a board, can use common sense as you look into it. I would like to know in all the emails you get supporting this bill, do they give you facts, or do they just hate something they don't understand? Many people have sent letters to Chris Rogers office and to your board. I've talked to many local professional foresters and asked them to weigh in, and they have.

Just a little insight to show what we are up against and it should concern everyone. Many people have voiced concerns through many different outlets. Here, we have local newspapers, which is something I still prefer to read. We also have an internet news source called the "Mendocino Voice". The "Mendocino Voice" has put out zero letters or articles from the opposition side. They've been sent in, but not getting sent out to public. They've put the letters that support the bill, but haven't allowed us to comment on those either. That's good journalism. The same internet source had an article on some idiot holding a non violence training for a "no kings" protest! So locally we hate fascism, but we'll only give one side of the story to get our way. They should look up the definition of fascism.

I hope a news outlet doing this concerns you. I hope that you see the only reason they would not print our letters is because they don't want public to get facts. I hope you know that they don't want facts out because facts can prove your narrative wrong. Nobody this day and age can admit they are wrong about anything, it's disgusting to witness lengths they will go to.

Thank you for your time,

Steve Arkelian
Logging Supervisor



AB2494

From Jason Klee [REDACTED]

Date Tue 3/3/2026 10:17 AM

To bos <bos@mendocinocounty.gov>

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.

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board, I would like to bring to your attention AB2494 and how it will negatively affect Mendocino County, and California as a whole.

First let me introduce myself. My name is Jason Klee. My wife, Tiffany, and I have lived our entire lives in Mendocino County. Our kids are the 5th generation to be born here and we're proud to have raised them here on the principles of hard work and high moral values that were passed down through the generations. My primary income while our kids were young came from working as a timber faller. I'll always be grateful that I had a career that allowed me to bring the kids along from time to time, and really let them see the forest through the trees.

I'm sure you're aware of AB2494 so I won't get too deep into the bill itself. Simply put, it changes the management objective of California's Demonstration State Forests to that of California State Parks. Some facts you may not know are that State Parks manages approximately 1.59 million acres, including about 140,000 acres of coast redwood forest. CalFire manages the 14 Demonstration State Forests, totaling about 85,000 acres. Jackson Demonstration State Forest is the largest of these at 48,652 acres. Collectively, the Demonstration State Forests grow approximately 75 million board feet of timber a year and harvest only 20 million per year on average. Jackson alone has an inventory of approximately 2.3 billion board feet of standing timber. It grows about 53 million per year with an average annual harvest of 14.3 million, or 27% of its annual growth.

Now let's compare the economic value of the current Demonstration State Forest management with the restoration / preservation management objective already used by California State Parks. The primary source of funding for State Parks comes out of the general fund, with lesser amounts coming from user fees, special funds, federal funding and grants. Simply put, they are taxpayer funded. And on top of that, there is currently a \$1.2 billion backlog of un-funded projects. The Demonstration State Forests on the other hand are primarily funded by revenue generated by timber sales. That revenue is legally required to be re-invested into forest research, infrastructure, recreation, etc. The Demonstration State Forests demonstrate how a forest can be managed for multiple goals and objectives at once.

So in conclusion, Demonstration State Forests as they are currently managed are self-sustaining government lands that provide research opportunities to help us learn how to better manage our forests, public and private, to ensure the timber industry remains sustainable for generations to come. They provide vital fish and wildlife habitat, public recreation and education, and local jobs, with little or no cost to the taxpayers. Many things are broken in California, but the Demonstration State Forests are not. Please encourage Assemblyman Rogers to write legislation addressing real problems that need to be fixed and leave Jackson and the other Demonstration State Forests alone!

Thank you for taking your time to read this. If you have any questions regarding where I sourced my information I'd be glad to share that with you. You can reach me at [REDACTED] or at

[REDACTED] AB 2494 is nothing more than an attack on the timber industry and economic sustainability of public lands. We need to make decisions based on science and economics rather than ideology and emotions.



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March 16, 2026

The Honorable Chris Rogers
California State Assembly
1021 O Street, Suite 5130
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 2494 (Rogers): State Forests: Forest Management – OPPOSE

Dear Assembly Member Rogers,

On behalf of the California Forestry Association (Calforests), I write in respectful opposition to Assembly Bill 2494, which proposes sweeping changes to the statutory framework governing California's Demonstration State Forests. While the bill seeks to emphasize ecological restoration and climate resilience, its provisions are unnecessary and risk undermining the long-standing statutory mission, financial structure, and land-use framework that support California's Demonstration Forest system. In particular, the bill eliminates the foundational purpose of Demonstration State Forests, disrupts established funding mechanisms, and conflicts with the land-use designation that governs much of the state forest land base.

Assembly Bill 2494 Undermines the Core Purpose of Demonstration State Forests

California's Demonstration State Forests were established to serve as working forests that demonstrate sustainable forest management practices. Existing law defines management as the handling of forest crops and soils to achieve maximum sustained production of high-quality forest products while balancing recreation, watershed, wildlife, and other values.

Assembly Bill 2494 would fundamentally redefine this mission by shifting the statutory definition of forest management away from sustained production and toward a framework centered primarily on biodiversity conservation, carbon storage, and climate resilience.

While these values are important—and are already incorporated into modern forest management—this proposed change effectively transforms Demonstration State Forests from working laboratories of sustainable forestry into primarily ecological reserves.

Such a shift strikes at the heart of the demonstration forest concept.

Demonstration State Forests exist so that the public, researchers, and forest managers can observe and evaluate how active forest management—including timber harvesting—can coexist with wildlife protection, watershed health, recreation, and climate resilience. Eliminating or severely restricting timber harvest would remove the primary tool by which sustainable forestry practices are demonstrated and studied in real-world conditions. In effect, the bill risks converting demonstration forests into de facto preserves, thereby eliminating the very practices they were created to demonstrate.

Further Restricting Sustainable Timber Harvest Is Unnecessary and Inconsistent with Demonstration Forestry

Contrary to the established mission of the Demonstration State Forests system, AB 2594 would substantially prohibit the sale of timber and other forest products unless harvest occurs strictly for ecological restoration or research purposes. This restriction is unnecessary for several reasons.

First, timber harvests on demonstration forests are governed by a robust regulatory framework that includes the Forest Practice Act, the Clean Water Act, and the Fish and Game Code. Permitting and agreements are not only CEQA compliant but are the most restrictive in the nation as they relate to forest management activities and are regulated by CAL FIRE, the Department of Fish and Game, and Regional Water Quality Control Boards. Issues of geologic stability are also reviewed on a permit-by-permit basis by the California Department of Conservation. Additionally, some of the Demonstration State Forests are subject to specifically tailored regulatory standards for the county in which the forests are located, with those standards being enforced jointly by the local jurisdiction and CAL FIRE.

Second, sustainable harvest is itself a key element of the demonstration mission. Demonstration forests allow the state to test silvicultural systems, study forest regeneration, evaluate fuel treatments, and generate data about long-term forest productivity and resilience, while also providing an opportunity to help understand impacts on other ecological values such as water quality, soil health, and carbon stocks.

Lastly, forest management and timber harvesting are conducted in times of need due to impacts from biotic and/or abiotic stressors such as disease, windthrow, insect, or wildfire impacts. AB 2494 appears to fully exclude this as an opportunity across the entire Demonstration State Forest system, which again, reduced the value of demonstration of these treatments, capturing mortality, and increasing both restoration and resiliency in forest systems.

Demonstration Forests Already Balance Ecological and Public Values

It is important to recognize that demonstration forests already operate under a management model that integrates ecological protection with sustainable forestry.

Current management practices incorporate:

- Habitat protection and watershed safeguards
- Wildfire risk reduction through thinning and fuels treatments
- Recreation and public access
- Research on forest resilience and climate adaptation
- Monitoring of wildlife and aquatic species

The demonstration forest model does not exclude ecological objectives; rather, it integrates them within an active forest management framework. Assembly Bill 2494, therefore, addresses concerns that are already accommodated under existing law and management practices.

California's Demonstration State Forests are unique public assets. They serve as living laboratories where sustainable forestry practices can be tested, refined, and demonstrated for the benefit of the state's forests, communities, and economy. Assembly Bill 2494 would fundamentally alter that model by redefining management, restricting timber harvest, and disrupting the funding structure that supports demonstration forest operations.

The Bill Disrupts Established Funding Mechanisms

Assembly Bill 2494 also alters the financial structure that supports Demonstration State Forests by redirecting revenues from demonstration forest operations into the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund (TRFR) rather than maintaining the current self-sustaining funding mechanism used solely for the Demonstration State Forests program through the Forest Resource Improvement Fund (FRIF). Established in 2012, TRFR was created to provide stable funding for the agencies involved in regulatory oversight of forest practices and to ensure that revenues generated from forest operations help support forest management, regulatory oversight, and restoration programs. TRFR has been reported to be in structural deficit for several years, and at current funding levels, has not achieved the goals outlined in its enabling legislation. By adding additional cost pressures to TRFR, the bill threatens to undermine a carefully designed system of environmental review under the state's broader forest regulatory program.

Moreover, relying on funding from TRFR would threaten adequate funding for the Demonstration State Forest system, which would need to compete for limited resources with other statutorily required programs. While the bill would shift an existing revenue stream to TRFR – recreational fees derived from Demonstration State Forests – this revenue will not offset the loss of revenue from timber sales, threatening the self-sustaining mechanism that has funded Demonstration State Forests since their inception. This would undermine the ability of the CAL FIRE to carry out the research, management, recreational, and educational programs these forests were created to support.

The Bill Conflicts with Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) Designations

Many demonstration state forests are located on lands designated as Timberland Production Zone (TPZ) under California law.

TPZ zoning is intended to preserve forestlands for long-term timber production and prevent conversion to non-forest uses. The designation reflects a policy determination that the highest and best use of these lands is the sustained production of timber and compatible forest uses. Policies that effectively prohibit or severely limit timber harvest on TPZ lands are inconsistent with the fundamental purpose of this zoning framework.

By limiting harvest to restoration or research purposes only, AB 2494 creates a policy conflict between state forest statutes and the broader TPZ framework intended to secure long-term forest productivity.

Jackson Demonstration State Forest: An Example of a Success Story

The Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF), one of 13 demonstration state forests, located in Mendocino County, is a prime example of the success of the Demonstration State Forest program.

Acquired in 1949, the private forestlands that would become JDSF had been heavily logged and were reported to contain a forest volume of around 350 million board feet. Under the management of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) and the partnership of many, JDSF has been transformed into a healthy, biologically diverse, climate-resilient, working forest with a standing volume in excess of 2.3 billion board feet – over six times what it had at acquisition. Along with tree volume, tree size within JDSF also increased dramatically during this period.

Importantly, this improvement in forest health occurred concurrently with a program of sustainable timber production, which has supported local economic resilience through the sale of 1.42 billion board feet of lumber. That represents enough lumber to construct over 80,000 homes and to support hundreds of jobs in Mendocino County alone. Lumber sales generated through JDSF also support the local economy through the creation of direct and indirect jobs and contribute to the local tax base all while providing a self-sustaining funding source for the State Demonstration Forest System. Since 1990 is reported that JDSF alone has contributed approximately 7,500 jobs, \$203 million in local wages, and \$3.3 million in local tax revenue to the County of Mendocino, all of which will be significantly reduced due to AB 2494.

Additional outcomes that have been derived from the active forest management on JDSF include:

- 35% (nearly 16,000 acres) have been set aside for the development of late succession or older forests.
- Full protection of old-growth conifer species.
- 19 million metric tons of CO₂ stored within JDSF
- JDSF is sequestering approximately 200,000 metric tons annually. These figures do not account for the long-term storage of carbon from lumber produced from JDSF.

In short, JDSF has, and continues to, live up to the mission on which the Demonstration State Forests program was established, and demonstrates that sustainable forest management is compatible with other values of the demonstration state forest system, including recreation, aesthetics, research, carbon capture and storage, and, most recently, tribal co-management.

The Statewide Footprint of CAL FIRE Demonstration State Forests

The Demonstration State Forest system currently includes 13 forests across California, totaling approximately 85,000 acres. Collectively, these lands represent roughly two percent of the total lands managed by the State of California. Despite their relatively small footprint, the Demonstration State Forests serve a unique and valuable role by demonstrating the principles of active forest management on working forest landscapes while maintaining a strong conservation ethic. The mission of the Demonstration State Forest system—balancing sustainable timber production, forest health, and ecological stewardship—provides an important example of how working forests can contribute to climate resilience and long-term resource conservation.

As currently drafted, AB 2494 effectively eliminates the foundational mission of the Demonstration State Forest system thereby removing the remaining examples of publicly managed working forests that consider long-term sustained yield of forest products from the state's land management portfolio the remaining examples of publicly managed working forests that consider long-term sustained yield of forest products.

While we must oppose the bill as currently drafted, we appreciate the conversations we have had with you to date regarding our shared goal of ensuring healthy, fire-resilient, biologically diverse, fiscally sound, and publicly accessible Demonstration State Forests. To that end, we look forward to working with you on amendments to ensure that active forest management, including long-term sustained yield of forest products, robust and ongoing longitudinal research, protection of rural communities and

economies, wildfire prevention, and fiscal certainty remain central components of the Demonstration State Forest system.

Calforests is the preeminent trade association and advocate for the state's forest industry. Collectively, our members – private forestland owners – manage nearly 4.0 million acres of forestland throughout the state and operate nearly the entirety of the state's forest products infrastructure, including sawmills, veneer mills, and biomass power plants. As the steward of a significant portion of the state's forest lands, Calforests members have a vested interest in ensuring that the state meets its wildfire prevention and forest resiliency goals. In fact, through our timber harvest operations and other fire mitigation projects (vegetation management, fuel breaks, etc.) our members collectively greatly contribute to the annual goal of treating one million acres a year.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our feedback on this measure. Please do not hesitate to contact me directly if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,



Matt Dias

President and CEO, Calforests

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