

**Assembly Joint Resolution**

**No. 18**

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**Introduced by Assembly Members Patterson and Gatto**

May 27, 2015

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Assembly Joint Resolution No. 18—Relative to the federal Wildfire Disaster Funding Act.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AJR 18, as introduced, Patterson. Federal Wildfire Disaster Funding Act.

This measure would urge the Congress of the United States to support H.R. 167, the federal Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, in order to provide a long-term, stable source of funding for federal agencies to conduct the necessary fuels management on national forestlands, while retaining resources to suppress catastrophic wildfires.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, According to the United States Forest Service,  
2 approximately 58 million acres of national forest lands, or one-third  
3 of the entire National Forest System, are in need of restoration due  
4 to the high risk for catastrophic wildfire; and  
5 WHEREAS, California is home to 21 national forests; and  
6 WHEREAS, Over the last three decades, fire season lengths  
7 have increased by 60 to 80 days, and annual acreages burned have  
8 more than doubled to over seven million acres; and  
9 WHEREAS, The United States Forest Service plans to thin less  
10 than 3 percent of its high-risk acreage in the next federal fiscal  
11 year; and

1 WHEREAS, One percent of the wildfires fought on national  
2 forestlands each year consume up to 30 percent of the annual fire  
3 budget, and the wildland fire management appropriation has tripled  
4 its portion of the United States Forest Service budget from 17  
5 percent to 51 percent from 1995 to 2014, inclusive; and

6 WHEREAS, Over seven of the last 12 years, the United States  
7 Forest Service and the United States Department of the Interior  
8 have had to divert over \$2 billion dollars in funds from other  
9 forestry and land management programs to fund firefighting efforts;  
10 and

11 WHEREAS, This “fire borrowing” has had adverse effects on  
12 other United States Forest Service projects, with funds being  
13 transferred from other programs that provide necessary hazardous  
14 fuel reduction and vegetation management on national forestlands;  
15 and

16 WHEREAS, This “fire borrowing,” in 2012, consisted of \$440  
17 million dollars being transferred to the fire suppression account  
18 and projects at all levels, including multiple fuel reduction projects  
19 on national forestlands in California, being cancelled or deferred;  
20 and

21 WHEREAS, It has been shown that post-wildfire rehabilitation  
22 costs can exceed the costs of wildfire suppression by two to 30  
23 times; and

24 WHEREAS, Frequent, severe wildfires result in great  
25 environmental damage, and the prevention of wildfires is necessary  
26 to decrease the great risk posed to California due to the large  
27 amount of overgrown national forestlands in the state; and

28 WHEREAS, The Governors of California, Washington, and  
29 Oregon requested the 113th Congress to support common sense  
30 wildfire funding, as embodied in the federal Wildfire Disaster  
31 Funding Acts of 2014, H.R. 3992 and S. 1875, but these pieces of  
32 legislation were not signed into law; and

33 WHEREAS, Catastrophic wildfires are an ongoing yet  
34 preventable threat to California and its residents, and the inability  
35 of federal agencies to manage national forestlands appropriately  
36 due to funding constraints is a pressing issue that must be addressed  
37 as quickly as possible; now, therefore, be it

38 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*  
39 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California  
40 respectfully urges the 114th Congress of the United States to

1 support H.R. 167, the federal Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, in  
2 order to provide a long-term, stable source of funding for federal  
3 agencies to conduct the necessary fuels management on national  
4 forestlands, while retaining resources to suppress truly catastrophic  
5 wildfires; and be it further

6 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
7 of this resolution to the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
8 to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and  
9 Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
10 States.

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