

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 16, 2015

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2015–16 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Joint Resolution

No. 18

Introduced by Assembly Members Patterson and Gatto
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Travis Allen and Olsen)
(Coauthors: Senators Hertzberg and Runner)

May 27, 2015

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

AJR 18, as amended, 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~~, *forest lands*, 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

1 WHEREAS, The United States Forest Service plans to thin less
2 than 3 percent of its high-risk acreage in the next federal fiscal
3 year; and

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

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

14 WHEREAS, This “fire borrowing” has had adverse effects on
15 other United States Forest Service projects, with funds being
16 transferred from other programs that provide necessary hazardous
17 fuel reduction and vegetation management on national ~~forestlands~~;
18 *forest lands*; and

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

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

27 WHEREAS, Frequent, severe wildfires result in great
28 environmental damage, and the prevention of wildfires is necessary
29 to decrease the great risk posed to California due to the large
30 amount of overgrown national ~~forestlands~~ *forest lands* in the state;
31 and

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

37 WHEREAS, Catastrophic wildfires are an ongoing yet
38 preventable threat to California and its residents, and the inability
39 of federal agencies to manage national ~~forestlands~~ *forest lands*

1 appropriately due to funding constraints is a pressing issue that
2 must be addressed as quickly as possible; now, therefore, be it

3 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*
4 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California
5 respectfully urges the 114th Congress of the United States to
6 support H.R. 167, the federal Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, in
7 order to provide a long-term, stable source of funding for federal
8 agencies to conduct the necessary fuels management on national
9 ~~forestlands~~, *forest lands*, while retaining resources to suppress
10 truly catastrophic wildfires; and be it further

11 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
12 of this resolution to the Speaker of the House of Representatives,
13 to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and
14 Representative from California in the Congress of the United
15 States.