

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JULY 2, 2015

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY JUNE 25, 2015

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~~, Olsen, Achadjian, Alejo, Atkins, Baker, Bigelow, Bloom, Bonilla, Bonta, Burke, Calderon, Campos, Chang, Chau, Chávez, Chiu, Chu, Cooley, Cooper, Dababneh, Dahle, Daly, Dodd, Eggman, Frazier, Beth Gaines, Gallagher, Eduardo Garcia, Gipson, Gomez, Gonzalez, Gordon, Gray, Grove, Hadley, Harper, Holden, Irwin, Jones, Kim, Lackey, Levine, Linder, Lopez, Low, Maienschein, Mathis, Mayes, McCarty, Medina, Melendez, Mullin, Nazarian, Obernolte, O'Donnell, Perea, Quirk, Ridley-Thomas, Salas, Steinorth, Mark Stone, Thurmond, Ting, Wagner, Waldron, Weber, Wilk, Williams, and Wood)

(Coauthors: Senators Hertzberg and Runner)

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 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 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

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

12 WHEREAS, One percent of the wildfires fought on national  
13 forest lands each year consume up to 30 percent of the annual fire  
14 budget, and the wildland fire management appropriation has tripled  
15 its portion of the United States Forest Service budget from 17  
16 percent to 51 percent from 1995 to 2014, inclusive; and

17 WHEREAS, Over seven of the last 12 years, the United States  
18 Forest Service and the United States Department of the Interior  
19 have had to divert over \$2 billion in funds from other forestry and  
20 land management programs to fund firefighting efforts; and

21 WHEREAS, This “fire borrowing” has had adverse effects on  
22 other United States Forest Service projects, with funds being  
23 transferred from other programs that provide necessary hazardous  
24 fuel reduction and vegetation management on national forest lands;  
25 and

26 WHEREAS, This “fire borrowing,” in 2012, consisted of \$440  
27 million being transferred to the fire suppression account and  
28 projects at all levels, including multiple fuel reduction projects on  
29 national forest lands in California, being cancelled or deferred;  
30 and

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

34 WHEREAS, Frequent, severe wildfires result in great  
35 environmental damage, and the prevention of wildfires is necessary  
36 to decrease the great risk posed to California due to drought,

1 climate change, and the large amount of overgrown national forest  
2 lands in the state; and

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

8 WHEREAS, Catastrophic wildfires are an ongoing yet  
9 preventable threat to California and its residents, and the inability  
10 of federal agencies to manage national forest lands appropriately  
11 due to funding constraints is a pressing issue that must be addressed  
12 as quickly as possible; now, therefore, be it

13 *Resolved by the Assembly and the Senate of the State of*  
14 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature of the State of California  
15 respectfully urges the 114th Congress of the United States to  
16 support H.R. 167, the federal Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, in  
17 order to provide a long-term, stable source of funding for federal  
18 agencies to conduct the necessary fuels management on national  
19 forest lands, while retaining resources to suppress truly catastrophic  
20 wildfires; and be it further

21 *Resolved,* That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies  
22 of this resolution to the Speaker of the House of Representatives,  
23 to the Majority Leader of the Senate, and to each Senator and  
24 Representative from California in the Congress of the United  
25 States.