

SAMPLE EMAIL TO BOARD OF FORESTRY

Subject: Strengthen the Minimum Fire Safe Road Standards

Dear Chair Giles and members of the Board:

In recent years, California wildfires have destroyed countless homes and natural habitat and taken far too many lives. The state must take actions that make wildfire-prone communities safer. The 2021 Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's (BOF) proposed minimum fire safe road regulations for existing roads do just the opposite. The BOF is ignoring common-sense wildfire safety standards for safe concurrent ingress and egress.

For 30 years, the BOF minimum fire safe standards have applied to all new residential, commercial, and industrial development in the State Responsibility Area. In response to climate change and land use patterns that have led to increasingly destructive wildfires, recent legislation (SB 901) requires the BOF to extend the fire safe regulations to include Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zones to provide for basic emergency access and perimeter wildfire protection.

But instead of strengthening or extending the current minimum fire safe road standards as recommended by the Fire Chiefs Working Group, the current proposal drastically weakens road safety regulations, thereby endangering both the public and firefighters and promoting new development in fire-prone areas. More wildland development means greater risk of fire, disruption of natural habitat and other environmental impacts. The BOF should not be prioritizing development over public safety and the health of our communities.

The BOF has an opportunity to strengthen the minimum fire safe road regulations. If it does not, the BOF must focus on public safety and conduct robust and data-supported analyses of road and infrastructure capacity to assess potential impacts to wildfire emergency response and evacuation. Moreover, the BOF must undertake an Environmental Impact Report that analyzes all potential significant impacts from these weaker regulations.

Sincerely,