



**COUNTY OF LAKE  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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September 1, 2026

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1021 O Street, Ste 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: AB 2494 (Rogers) – Request for Veto**

Honorable Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the County of Lake, our Board respectfully requests that you **VETO AB 2494 (Rogers)**.

As you are very probably aware, our Board has Opposed AB 2494 throughout the Legislative Session, out of concern it may have unintended consequences that impede crucial research and other sustainable forest management practices ongoing at Boggs Mountain Demonstration State Forest. Lake County supports a balanced, science-driven approach to forest stewardship that includes active management.

This perspective is informed by Lake County's **considerable buy-in to the work and strategies advanced by your Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force**. **Given all that has been invested in that effort to ensure data supported practices are at the fore when managing California's forests, why change course now?** Instead, our Board asks that you VETO AB 2494, as written, and encourage a more holistic view to be taken, ensuring Demonstration State Forests throughout California are managed as complements and exemplars of the principles your Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force has worked so hard to cultivate. As written, AB 2494 would allow consideration of the Task Force's *Wildfire and Landscape Resilience Action Plan*; however, its being listed alongside a number of other resources seems to fall short of recognizing the value of State investments in that collaborative and science-based effort, to-date. **You will agree, *profoundly* greater effort to balance statewide (forestry-focused AND financial) interests and build consensus was put into the Task Force's work than has been invested in AB 2494; choosing to VETO AB 2494 would appropriately consider that imbalance.**

Although AB 2494 has been characterized as legislation intended to advance wildfire prevention and forest resilience, that is not its principal effect. Instead, the bill threatens to fundamentally rewrite the statutory purpose and management direction of CAL FIRE's Demonstration State

Forest (DSF) system with the clear intent to limit sustainable forest management as a coequal objective of these unique public lands.

California's approximately 85,000 acres of Demonstration State Forests provide something increasingly rare: large, state-owned working forest landscapes where active management, long-term research, restoration, recreation, and forest-product production can occur together. AB 2494 risks fundamentally changing that model.

### **AB 2494 Replaces Established Forest Management Principles with Uncertain Standards**

California already regulates forest management through the Forest Practice Act and Forest Practice Rules, using terminology and management principles developed over decades of regulatory implementation and judicial review. AB 2494 moves away from that established framework and introduces novel concepts, including management for “durable onsite carbon storage and sequestration.” The bill expressly incorporates this concept into both its definition of public benefits and the metrics that may be used to evaluate DSF management.

Forests are dynamic biological systems affected by wildfire, drought, insects, disease, competition, and climate. Sustainable forestry requires the ability to actively manage these conditions through thinning, prescribed fire, harvesting, reforestation, and other treatments. Mandating the prioritization of an undefined concept such as “durable onsite carbon” risks prioritizing the retention of carbon in place over managing forests for long-term health and resilience.

Replacing science-based, established forestry concepts with new and uncertain statutory terminology also invites disagreement over interpretation and implementation. The likely results are greater regulatory uncertainty, project delays, increased litigation risk, and additional costs to the state—not improved wildfire resilience.

### **The Bill Undermines the Demonstration Purpose of These Forests**

The DSFs are uniquely valuable because they can demonstrate forest-management techniques under real-world conditions over meaningful periods of time. AB 2494 itself recognizes these forests as “living laboratories” where management tools can be demonstrated and research hypotheses tested. Yet the bill simultaneously restructures the program in a manner that narrows the range of management activities that can be demonstrated.

The approximately 85,000-acre DSF system generates science and management experience applicable to forests across the state. The values of these forests, therefore, extend far beyond their boundaries. California needs landscapes where researchers and land managers can evaluate different forest conditions, treatment strategies, and management approaches—not a statutory framework that moves these forests toward a more restrictive preservation model.

If California needs additional lands dedicated primarily to preservation or recreation, those decisions should be made through a deliberate statewide conservation process informed by conservation science, landscape needs, and equitable public access. The Demonstration State Forest system should not be repurposed to accomplish that objective.

### **AB 2494 Creates Fiscal and Operational Consequences**

Active management also supports the operation and maintenance of the DSFs. The timber-sale contracts across the DSFs have historically advanced forest management while also supporting restoration, biodiversity, wildfire resiliency, the development of late successional and late seral

forest structure, expanded recreational access, and supported world class forest research. Summarily disregarding the value that forest management has provided simply does not align with the policy of the state in and pursuits of these efforts as individual projects requiring independent permitting and contracting would significantly increase state costs.

Recreation revenues do not currently cover the cost of providing recreational services in the DSF system, which instead relies on revenue generated through sustainable timber harvest operations for funding. To make up for the loss of revenue expected to result from reduced timber harvest, AB 2494 identifies the Timber Regulation and Forest Restoration Fund as a supplemental funding source for the DSFs. Reducing these forests' ability to generate revenue through active management while increasing reliance on other state funding sources is neither efficient nor fiscally prudent.

California's Demonstration State Forests should continue to demonstrate how sustainable forestry, wildfire resilience, research, restoration, tribal co-management, recreation, biodiversity, and forest products can coexist. These objectives need not compete with one another. Indeed, demonstrating how they can successfully operate together is precisely what makes the DSF system unique and valuable.

AB 2494 moves away from that balanced model and replaces established forest-management principles with unnecessary statutory and financial uncertainty. Your Administration has invested considerable focus this Legislative year in setting up California's next Governor for success; you will agree, ensuring a balanced, science-driven approach guides our DSFs would realize that intent.

For all of the reasons discussed herein, the **County of Lake respectfully requests that you VETO AB 2494 (Rogers).**

Respectfully,

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Chair  
Lake County Board of Supervisors  
COUNTY OF LAKE

Cc: Honorable State Senator Mike McGuire; Honorable Assembly Majority Leader Cecilia Aguiar-Curry