



SIERRA PACIFIC INDUSTRIES

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April 20, 2026

Kristen Lark, District Ranger
Mad River Ranger District
Six Rivers National Forest
741 State Highway 36
Bridgeville, CA 95526

RE: Comments in Support of the South Fork Mountain Vegetation Management Project

Dear District Ranger Lark,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the South Fork Mountain Vegetation Management Project, these comments are written on behalf of Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI). I am writing to express strong support for the proposed project and its objectives to reduce hazardous fuels, improve forest health, and increase wildfire resilience across this critically important ridgeline. The project area lies within one of the nation's designated high-risk firesheds, and the need for proactive, strategic fuel reduction is both urgent and well-justified.

I am particularly supportive of the **project-specific amendment that would allow the use of ground-based equipment on slopes up to 50 percent**. This amendment is essential for several reasons:

- **Operational feasibility:** Much of the project area contains terrain that exceeds the standard 35–40% slope threshold. Allowing ground-based equipment up to 50% enables treatments to occur where they are most needed, rather than limiting work to only the gentlest ground.
- **Improved fuel reduction effectiveness:** Ground-based systems can remove small-diameter material and ladder fuels more efficiently and thoroughly than cable-only systems in many settings. This results in more effective fuel breaks and greater long-term fire resilience.
- **Reduced environmental impact:** Modern low-ground-pressure equipment, directional felling, and strict soil-protection BMPs allow operations on steeper slopes while maintaining soil stability and minimizing erosion. In many cases, ground-based treatment reduces the need for extensive hand work or repeated entries, lowering overall disturbance.
- **Worker safety and project efficiency:** Allowing ground-based equipment on steeper slopes reduces reliance on high-risk manual operations and improves the likelihood that the project can be completed within the necessary timeframes.

The South Fork Mountain ridge is a critical strategic location for wildfire response, community protection, and landscape-scale resilience. The combination of commercial thinning, understory treatments, and prescribed fire proposed in the project represents a balanced, science-based approach aligned with the Wildfire Crisis Strategy and the urgent need to address hazardous fuel accumulation.

I appreciate the Forest Service's use of emergency authority to expedite implementation where appropriate. I encourage the agency to move forward with the project and the slope-limitation amendment so that this high-priority landscape can receive the treatments it urgently needs.

Thank you for your work on this project and for considering these comments.

Sincerely,

Miles Schack

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