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Comments: I support the Tahoe National Forest's plan to allow fire managers the flexibility to let certain lightning-ignited fires burn under carefully evaluated conditions where (1) public health and safety are not threatened, and (2) the effects of the fire would be beneficial to forest health. This will help restore much-needed resiliency to the public forests in our area, and will make the effects of future wildfires less severe.

A century of fire suppression has resulted in the elimination of natural fire cycles which would normally keep forest fuels in check through frequent small, low intensity fires. Now, the accumulation of many dense fuels on the ground, coupled with longer, hotter fire seasons, more development in fire prone areas, and a legacy of mining and logging practices that removed the large fire-resilient trees from much of our landscape has created a "perfect storm" for catastrophic "megafires" which are sadly becoming the new normal in our forested areas. Living under the threat of these fires is no longer a sustainable practice, for our public health, our economy and our environment.

Without this amendment, the Tahoe has very little flexibility to allow natural fires to burn, even if they pose no threat to life or property and will likely improve forest health by reducing fuels. The proposed amendment simply allows the Forest to consider this option and provides guidance on the social and ecological considerations used to inform their decision. I commend the Forest for taking this approach and hope that it can be used regularly to protect the natural resources which are so vital to our lives and our livelihoods in California.