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First name: Rich

Last name: Farrington

Organization:

Title:

Comments: Please see my enclosed letter

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US Forest Service

(Electronic Comments on the February 2026 MAC DEIS)

I support the MAC Proposed Actions in the DEIS. A few specific comments are:

1a. Watershed damage from the 2021 221,835 ac Caldor Fire [ldquo]next door[rdquo] to the MAC area should be addressed in the EIS to better support the high probability of a huge threat to the Mokelumne River, water quality, and watershed resources in the MAC planning area. The terrain, prior vegetation, and soils in the Caldor burn area are similar to the MAC area. The USFS BAER Report shows the Caldor Fire burned 28,639 acres at [rdquo]High Severity,[rdquo] and 118,631 acres of High and Moderate Severity, and had an [ldquo]Estimated Debris Flow Probability[rdquo] of millions of tons of soil and debris that US Geological Survey scientists predicted could dump into the drainages. The Report Conclusion: [ldquo]Potential post-fire effects from the Caldor Fire and areas of concern for both erosion and post-fire increased flooding, ash and sediment input that impacts water quality and include but are not limited to watersheds that flow into Jenkinson Reservoir and Lake Tahoe.[rdquo]

This loss of forest, productive soil, and the likelihood of tons of soil, ash, and debris being dumped into the drainages in the Caldor Fire burn area shows these are huge threats to the Mokelumne River in the MAC Planning Area to reservoirs, water quality, the free-flowing Mokelumne River, the section of State Designated Mokelumne Wild and Scenic River, and threatened or endangered aquatic wildlife such as frogs and other wildlife downstream that is important evidence that should be in the MAC EIS as likely watershed/water quality impacts resulting from No Action. Consider inserting under Water Quality on pgs 7, 83, and/or 85, or other , and in Literature Cited.

The USFS Caldor Fire BAER Assessment Report source: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/nfs/files/legacy-media/eldorado/Caldor%20BAER%20Assessment%20Report.pdf>

1b. The 2021 963,276 acre Dixie Fire debris flows from severe burn areas should also be cited in the EIS as demonstrating the actual huge impact potential in the MAC area of debris going into the Mokelumne River resulting from No Action. The Dixie Fire severely burned about 250,000 acres in the Feather River watershed that contributed to triggering Post-fire debris flow damage to the Feather River as documented by the US Geological Survey at <https://www.usgs.gov/programs/landslide-hazards/science/dixie-fire-post-fire-debris-flows-a-tale-two-storms>. This should be cited in the MAC EIS as an example of the threat to the Mokelumne River water quality, fish, soil productivity, and the State Designated Mokelumne Wild & Scenic River downstream. Consider adding to the likely effects of no action, maybe on pgs 7, 83 or/and 85 or other, and in Literature Cited.

Dixie Fire MTBS Burn Severity graph [ndash] 26% of 963,000 acres burned at high severity or approximately 250,000 acres, the same size as the MAC Planning Area.

2. Protect Owls from severe wildfire. Short-term effects are needed to gain long-term benefits-- the analysis in

DEIS Chapters 3.1 (Issue 1A) and 3.2 supports the benefit of short-term habitat impacts to achieve long-term benefits for CSO conservation. A healthy, resilient forest provides the structural characteristics necessary for CSO survival and reproduction, while also protecting habitat from threats such as wildfire, insects, disease, and drought. The MAC DEIS demonstrates that the proposed action, including the Forest Plan Amendments consistent with Appendix C, enhances forest health and resilience, thereby increasing the likelihood of CSO persistence, reproductive success, and long-term survival.

This just published study helps support fuel reduction in PACs and should be added to the narrative on the effects of the proposed action (possibly pg 62) and to the Literature Cited:

* Severe fire has impacted populations of the California spotted owl more than fuels management or drought-related tree mortality, Elizabeth Ming-Yue Ng, et. al.,

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Some relevant conclusions of this study are [ldquo]severe fire has led to greater declines in occupancy than fuels management, Spotted Owls were more likely to occur in areas with more drought tree mortality, lighter intensity fuels management is unlikely to negatively affect spotted owls.[rdquo]

3. I support the proposed treatments to restore forest resilience due to Climate Change (i.e., reducing forest density and competition) that should be more intensive than current forest management practices. The Proposed Action increases forest resilience to drought, insect, disease, and fire. I support the proposed stand density index (SDI) targets by forest type proposed for the MAC Project that were determined by scientists. I support the quotes from John Muir in the 1890[rsquo]s about the [ldquo]openness of the Sierra woods being one of their most distinguishing characteristics.[rdquo] This gives a perspective on the pre-1900 low tree density in Sierran forests.

4. Fuel Breaks are critical to helping firefighters control wildfires and in protecting communities and infrastructure. I support the proposed MAC fuel break proposals of "up to 500 feet" and "up to 1,000" feet on Highways 4 & 88. Fuel Breaks need to be planned carefully with respect to priority for 1. reducing severe fire, 2. maintainability, and in 3. setting priorities for thinning and prescribed burning.

CONCLUSION

The MAC proposed action delivers substantial improvements in forest resilience and reduction of wildfire risk, reduction of impact risks to the Mokelumne River and communities, as well as reduction of all other related impacts of No Action. Pre-treatment conditions reflect widespread vulnerability, with high stand density, elevated mortality risk, and significant potential for severe fire behavior. The analysis shows prescribed fire is essential for achieving landscape-scale restoration goals. Treatment of vegetation is required prior to prescribed fire. This combined strategy reduces near-term wildfire exposure, improves firefighter safety, and sets the stage for reintroducing natural fire regimes, ensuring that the forest can withstand future disturbances while maintaining critical ecological and social values.

Rich

Rich Farrington

Amador Water Agency Director, D-3