



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

<http://feinstein.senate.gov>

November 29, 2016

The Honorable Edmund G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

This letter is to ask what specific assistance, funding, and authority you need from the federal government to address the rapidly worsening dead tree crisis in California. Last week, the Forest Service reported an extremely concerning 102 million dead trees from their most recent aerial surveys in the state. As we head in to a sixth year of historic drought, this crisis is far from over.

The unprecedented number of dead trees in California is an urgent public safety issue. Dead and dying trees will create elevated fire risk for years to come across the state, and those nearest to homes, businesses, roads, and utilities pose the most immediate threat to lives and property. Now more than ever, the state and federal governments must take coordinated steps to remove the most hazardous dead trees as quickly as possible.

In September, I asked the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, to fund 19 tree removal projects identified by your Tree Mortality Task Force that cover 38,000 acres of Tier 1 High Hazard areas. In response, he allocated \$11 million for 10 of these projects. Attached for your reference, is a follow up letter asking that he immediately make available the remaining \$27 million needed to complete these projects.

One of the biggest impediments to quickly addressing this tree mortality crisis is the cost of transporting felled trees from the forests to the mills, biomass facilities, and export facilities that can process them. If the state legislature were to identify additional funding to help offset these costs, this would facilitate more rapid tree removal and productive usage of the dead trees.

Please let me know what additional federal action, funding, and authority you need to protect public safety by removing dead trees as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/tc/as