



1/5/2017

Little Hoover Commission  
925 L St, Suite 805  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Members of the Commission,

The California Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) on behalf of the 98 Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) in the State of California sincerely thanks you for the opportunity to testify before the commission on this critical issue. We also thank you for taking up this issue as it is one of the top resource concerns facing our state both for the health of the forest and the people living in it. We are honored to be part of this hearing and are willing to provide any additional information that would be useful. Please don't hesitate to ask us for references, materials or further elaboration.

In the answers to your questions below you will find a framing of the tree mortality issue from the point of view of local RCDs which are the local agencies with the mission to support local communities and landowners/ managers in addressing natural resource concerns. It includes the root of the problem- stocking rates, lack of attention to healthy soils and limited resources for forest management; immediate needs- landowners education and support for proper forest management both in the affected and soon to be affected areas; promising new opportunities- biochar, healthy soils, compost and mulch; as well as identifying the biggest need- funding for an underserved population of small landowners (parcel sizes 10 acres or less) and the RCDs to be able to better support local solutions to the tree mortality crisis, climate change, drought and future resource concerns as they emerge.

We thank you for your time and attention and look forward to the continued dialogue.

Please see our response to your inquiry on the following pages.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Buhr".

Karen Buhr  
Executive Director

**CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICTS**  
801 K Street, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor Sacramento, CA 95814  
**Phone:** (916) 457-7904 **Fax:** (916)457-7934  
**email:** staff@carcd.org

- An overview of what resource conservation districts are and how they're funded.

### *RCD Mission/ Formation*

RCDs are your local partner for conservation and agriculture.

Resource Conservation Districts (RCDs) are special districts formed beginning in the 1930s with the purpose of solving local resource challenges and be the boots on the ground for State and Federal agencies. Originally formed as a sister agency to the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) during the dust bowl crisis, RCDs worked neighbor to neighbor to keep soil on the ground on an acre by acre basis. While soil, water and farming are still at our core, our goals have evolved and diversified with the needs of our communities. For example, in urban RCDs programming that meets community need now includes conservation of remaining habitat, environmental education, education for small urban backyards, urban farms, gardens and bird conservation. Other examples of RCD projects include forest health, fish passages, habitat restoration, conservation plantings, watershed planning, community outreach and forums, agricultural water and soil conservation, carbon farming, water conservation on all land use types, biochar facilities, research on methodology, urban runoff, stormwater retention, and invasive species removal among many others. Drought, climate change, habitat and agricultural viability are currently our most frequent topics.

### *RCD Funding*

While a few RCDs receive significant local tax base, most either receive miniscule or no direct funding from local tax or other government sources. RCDs function much like non profits and are primarily grant funded, but hold the additional requirements of transparency and accountability that special districts are held to by law. In some ways it's the best of both worlds- we are grassroots, engaged and motivated and have transparency and accountability. However, for funding our governmental role creates the challenge of unfunded mandates and limits some funding sources.

Because we believe in the work we do and our communities, we make amazing things happen. RCDs create community changing projects by scraping together donations, writing grants, and (an emerging funding source) providing fee for service programs for local landowners. Through this work, many RCDs transform limited or no tax base into multi millions of dollars that go directly to on-the-ground work to improve California's natural resources including work that helps reduce the drought and mitigate climate change.

One great example is the Santa Cruz RCD. This RCD receives approximately \$40,000 - \$60,000 in local tax from Santa Cruz County. They are able to raise \$40 of grant funds for every dollar they receive from local tax. In other words, they raise over \$1.6 million that is applied directly to local projects that solve the State's resource projects by protecting water, soil, air, agriculture and wildlife as well as supporting the local economy. Overall, the benefit of natural resource investment is significant. A 2015 report entitled, Natures Value in Santa Cruz County evaluated the economic benefits that natural resources provide to the residents of Santa Cruz County.

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That report documented an annual flow of between \$600 million to \$2.2 billion from the County's natural resources through ecosystem services such as carbon sequestration, water filtration, and recreational opportunities, among 18 other benefits. As discussed in the report, fire could have a catastrophic impact on the provisioning of these services, particularly, as described, on water supply and habitat for endemic species.

Given that Local solutions are the only way to solve the dispersed conservation issues like the drought, climate change and their related issues like tree mortality, a lack of State funding to RCDs greatly limits the State's ability to address resource challenges locally.

#### *Capacity Building*

CARCD through generous funding, partnership and support from over a dozen foundations, Federal State and non-profit partners has been leading the California RCDs in a capacity building effort to assist RCDs in being better able to meet community, State and national goals for water conservation, climate change, tree mortality and the numerous resource issues that only local action will solve. By strengthening this critical infrastructure, we hope to better provide the state with what RCDs were created to be- effective local go-to solutions to statewide challenges. We feel our success in capacity building is critical to the State being able to solve the next generation of resource challenges.

- The role of resource conservation districts in promoting forestry practices that result in resilient forests and healthy ecosystems. What has been the impact of climate change and the tree mortality crisis on them?

#### *The Role of RCDs- providing a bridge*

The Californian Association of Resource Conservation Districts (CARCD) and locally led RCDs are committed to finding solutions to forest health challenges in California. For over 70 years, CARCD and RCDs have provided local assistance and coordinated opportunities to meet landowner, local, regional and statewide needs

RCDs provide a critical local link between the big picture resource solutions and on the ground action. Most landowners want to do the right thing but lack the technical knowledge and/or resources to get it done. We connect landowners with both.

RCDs are a trusted source for landowners to receive information, assistance and advice from a reliable source that is not regulatory. Landowners know that they can walk through our door and get the information they need without fear of reprisal. Through broad partnerships in our community, we create programs, connect landowners with existing programs and/ or seek funding to provide expanded services in our counties. As such, we play a critical role in promoting and executing voluntary conservation. Forest Health has been no exception. Locally led RCDs are a critical link to the health of the forest and eco systems.

#### *How we work*

RCDs build broad partnerships with State, Federal and local partners to combine resources in order to make our entire community safer and our collective work more effective. We make the connections that bring in a watershed wide and agency wide focus. For example, we create

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community fuel breaks that help slow down a fire if it were to break out and benefit the entire community. We work with federal and state agencies to perform clearings on their land in order to keep fire from spreading from government owned land into private property. We design community wildfire and watershed protection plans that help communities target their resources towards the highest priorities.

#### *Local RCDs in Action- Tree Mortality*

Many local landowners are panicked about the dead trees on their property, when and where to remove them and lack the resources to do so. RCDs are giving local landowners (both with and without the tree mortality epidemic) the tools to solve their tree mortality and forest health problems through workshops, brochures, informational websites and one-on-one assistance. They are also applying for funding for landowners to assist them in caring for their properties. Local assistance includes chipper programs in which landowners are able to use chippers to help grind tree waste on their property, fire wise evaluations that help landowners understand the threat to their property and remedies to fix it, and educating landowners on what to do after a fire. While resources are limited, RCDs are assisting landowners in removing trees by organizing community work days and connecting landowners with existing funding opportunities. RCDs are also seeking to remove trees and provide community support. Given the extreme need for assistance in the Tree Mortality Area, every RCD in the tree mortality area is currently pursuing CALFIRE, Sierra Nevada Conservancy and other grant funding to either augment current landowner assistance programs or start new ones.

In addition to one on one assistance, RCDs bring communities together to create Fuel Breaks that help protect communities in the event of wildfire.

A few examples of forestry programs around the state:

- Tahoe RCD- “Fire Adapted Communities Program” has raised over \$5.8 million to reduce the overall fire risk to their community or “footprint of risk” by assisting community members in being compliant with defensible space requirements through technical assistance, work days, inspections and chipping.
- Sierra RCD is actively opening a biochar facility in the high mortality area to provide a service to landowners
- Placer RCD has a long history of providing forestry assistance to landowners, from conducting individual site visits to facilitating large scale fuels reduction projects. Over the past three years, Placer RCD and partners have implemented over \$1 million of shaded fuel breaks. They also have an on call chipper program that helps landowners reduce woody debris on their property and turn it into a soil amendment/ water retention material. The Chipper Program annually services more than 1000 parcels, and chips about 4,000 tons of woody biomass.
- Trinity RCD Community Forest is used to demonstrate new and innovative techniques for forest management practices and to educate landowners on healthy forest management and harvest. This community resource is in constant use and serves as an education center, gathering place, and resource.
- Fall River RCD built and manages the Burney/Hat Creek Community Forest
- Eldorado/Georgetown RCD Native seedling reforestation nursery works to supply native seedlings to the state of California. It is essential to forest health

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and biological integrity that land managers have the ability to reforest with native seed stock in order to protect the diversity of the forest. This service was previously provided by State and Federal agencies. With funding cuts, the nursery programs were suspended. The El Dorado RCD has stepped in to provide this valuable service to the State.

- Conservation District of Greater San Diego County Fire Safe Council a collaboration with local, state, federal, and tribal fire agency partners. The program helps landowners be firewise, helps remove diseased and dying trees, educates the public on not transporting firewood and holds collaborative meetings to address upcoming and current pest concerns.
- Honey Lake Valley RCD Diamond Mountain Forest and Meadow Restoration Project improves water quality, water quantity, and habitat while specifically restoring mountain meadows and conifer forests.
- Central Sierra RCD Joint Powers Authority JPA (SCRMC) RCDs work across district boundaries to complete regional projects including fuel breaks, forest thinnings, firewise evaluations and other projects that protect the health of the forest in the Central Sierras including the 6 county region.
- Mariposa Co RCD Tree mortality task force, Mariposa is just one of the many RCDs that participate in their local tree mortality task force and are in the process of developing a landowner assistance program.
- Inland Empire RCD maintains native scrub forests on conservation easement restoration and also educates community members and school groups about the native vegetation of the area.

*Particular focus on landowners of small acreage- 10 acres or less*

In the current tree mortality epidemic there is a particular population that has been underserved- small landowners (10 acres or less) on rural residential lots. Collectively, they own approximately 30% of the forested land in CA. While we work with all landowner types (including State and Federal Government), we target this group due to a lack of services.

Many in the State of California have purchased homes in the Sierra Foothills and other forested regions to seek sanctuary from the bustle of urban life. This population has either retired to the mountains, commute to the city, or found local businesses that sustain them. Many of these community members have never owned forested property and don't know how to care for it. Given their large and growing presence on the landscape, it is critical that they are educated on how to care for this precious resource for the health of the entire forest.

*Statewide work*

On the statewide level, CARCD, the CARCD Forestry Committee, and local RCDs have been advocating for funding for landowners through CALFIRE's CFIP program, the NRCS EQIP program and other sources of funding as they become available. The Forestry committee has been active in building partnerships and shared goals with all levels of government and non profits including NRCS, CALFIRE, USFS, land trusts and other NGOs.

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### *The Effect of Climate Change and Tree Mortality*

The tree mortality crisis is bringing attention to and amplifying the work RCDs have done for 75 years. While we have always worked with landowners, the need is now much more pressing. While we have always worked with our communities, the need for coordination is much more important. The crisis has not fundamentally changed what we do, it has just made our work much more important and created an overwhelming need for our services. We are not able to meet the needs of our community because of the high demand. It has emphasized the need for additional funding to support RCDs, community action and landowner assistance.

- When meeting with Commission staff, you said that one of the core problems in responding to the tree mortality crisis and getting ahead of future crises is that people do not understand what a healthy forest looks like. Can you elaborate on this, discuss ways that resource conservation districts are trying to change perceptions of what healthy forests look like and share any recommendations you might have on how the state might assist that effort?

Californians are used to a “picture” of what a forest should look like. Most of us picture a forest that is too densely stocked- at approximately 2-4 feet separation. That is because most of the Sierra is stocked that way. A more accurate stocking rate based on scientific understanding and an assessment of pre-settlement stocking rates is 10-12 feet meaning that in rough figures we have 3-5 times the number of trees in the Sierra than the area is capable of supporting. Stocking rates are a primary cause of the current tree mortality epidemic.

A dense forest is unhealthy and places stress on trees due to competition with neighboring trees particularly for water resources. The competition and stress is exacerbated during drought. Stressed trees have less resilience to fight off pests and dense forests harbor diseases at a higher rate than less populated forests. Not only do dense forests communicate more disease but they are also less able to fight it off.

In addition to the die off, dense forests increase the intensity and occurrence of wildfire. They limit habitat value for wildlife, reduce ground water storage, encourages invasive species and affect overall watershed health.

It's important to forest health that stocking rates return to a more healthy rate.

### *What can we do?*

Getting out in front of the epidemic with assistance to landowners and managers may prevent or slow the spread of the infestation. While there is little landowners can do about the drought, they can help the resilience of their forest by reducing stocking rates, improving soil health (to help retain water) and other simple practices.

By educating landowners and providing them the resources to thin trees and improve soil health now in Placer, Tahoe and counties beyond, we may be able to slow or reduce the impact of the spread. And, of course, rain will help all of it.

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The RCDs are working to accomplish this through education programs and individual assessments/ consultations. Part of a comprehensive landowner assistance program is returning the forest to more realistic and healthy stocking rates.

Land owners need to be educated on 2 key factors-

1. Soil Health – By improving soil health, more moisture is retained which allows trees to have access to more water for a longer period of time simply by improving the soil. Additional water increases the resilience of the forest and can have dramatic effects on the health of the forest. Forested properties with healthier soils are more likely to fight off pest and disease.

2. Proper stocking rates- By thinning the forest trees have more access to water, less competition and are thus less stressed. Thinning will increase the likelihood that our forests will be resilient to bark beetles and other threats.

Land owners and managers also need the resources to be able to address forest health. Agencies and private landowners have to be able to get out in front of the problem and manage the land that is likely to be impacted.

#### *State Assistance*

The State has a vested interest in educating landowners on these 2 factors. CALFIRE routinely recognizes the opportunity and importance of getting out ahead of the crisis. However, with the limit funding available for forest health, funding tends to go to fighting fires and then land management. This is true at all levels of government. The greatest assistance could be through additional funding. RCDs can do a lot with very little funding, so small amounts would go a long way. Also, a more coordinated education effort would be helpful.

- How are resource conservation districts working with landowners to mitigate the effects of the tree mortality crisis? How are they working to mitigate the effects on watersheds and wildlife habitat? How does the state partner with resource conservation districts on these projects? Are there ways the state could provide more support?

#### *Expanding current efforts*

RCDs are mitigating the effect on landowners, forests and watersheds by creating and expanding programs that incorporate public safety, watershed health and a community wide view. Most RCDs have been creating or participating in the creation of watershed plans and community wildfire plans for decades. We have built partnerships and compiled information in order to make decisions with a whole community perspective- including habitat and watershed health. The solutions to crisis' like the tree mortality crisis rely on the goals, partnerships and information that have come from strong planning efforts. Examples of the specific type of work and programs are listed above. While planning may not sound like important or critical work, watershed and wildfire planning identifies habitat needs, watershed needs, and places priorities on critical needs or low hanging fruit. It also identifies areas that would be greatly affected by wildfire and strategies to mitigate damage. When crisis hits, this information is critical to making sound, efficient and effective decisions. All of our programs are based on the local knowledge of our communities and our strong planning effort.

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### *State Agencies*

Much of this work has been done in partnership or with funding from State and Federal agencies. RCDs rely on CFIP, SNC, and CALFIRE funding to get a good portion of our work done. Since RCDs are State agencies under statute, work often happens through partnerships in which State agencies contract directly with RCDs and other times through competitive grant cycles. A couple current examples include a contract between SNC and Placer RCD to conduct watershed assessments throughout the SNC region. Another is a long standing relationship between CALFIRE and SCRMC (a JPA of RCDs in the Sierra region) to implement CFIP funding.

State agencies can do 2 things to help us get this important work done:

- 1) Recognize the important role RCDs play and utilize us more for on the ground work. State agencies have a tendency to want to “recreate the wheel” rather than use the existing infrastructure of RCDs.
- 2) Provide more funding to RCDs and local communities to service the landowner population that has largely been underserved.

### *Examples of Agencies/ partners that RCDs work regularly with*

- NRCS
- US Forest Service
- California Dept of Forestry (CALFIRE)
- University of CA Cooperative Extension
- Fire Safe Councils of CA
- Land Trusts
- Registered Professional Foresters
- Ca Dept. of Conservation
- Ca Dept, of Water Resources
- CA. Forest Stewardship Council
- Bureau of Land Management
- Sierra Nevada Conservancy
- Coastal Conservancy
- US Fish and Wildlife
- CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife
- Non Profit partners
- Others

### *Limited by funding*

The biggest need is funding. RCDs have the information, tools, relationships with landowners, and partnerships to make significant impacts in their communities. However, there is not enough funding to get the work done. Even with the limited grant funding available, we will not be able to fully serve our communities.

### *Underserved Populations*

As mentioned above, small landowners have received very little funding in this crisis. Funding has been prioritized to state forests (where they intersect with communities or other public safety concerns), roadways, power lines, civic infrastructure and major safety channels. But, very little is going to private small ( 10 acres or less) landowners. Many of these landowners fall

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below the poverty line or are seniors and lack the financial ability to solve the problem themselves. CARCD recently submitted an RCPP grant to the NRCS. In pulling together the 45+ partners in the 6 county area, every one recognized the critical need to serve these landowners and the lack of resources to do so.

#### *Funding for significant projects*

Funding is also needed to restore areas on larger tracts of private property where this work is not economically viable. For example, following a catastrophic fire, private timberland owners are primarily going to treat burned material and reforest in areas where those costs can be recouped – this is primarily on the flattest ground. Therefore, the ravines and steep ground abutting streams and rivers that have a significant impact on watershed health are in need of public investment to be able to provide the public benefits of forest and watershed health. Work in these areas is the most expensive and requires the most environmental review – and will yield little to no merchantable timber to pay for these costs. Placer RCD is currently implementing a CalFire GGRF grant to reforest steep private timberland that was destroyed in the King Fire. This is in the Rubicon River watershed, which is the main tributary to the Middle Fork American River, which provides the majority of drinking and irrigation water for residents of Placer County, as well as to many downstream beneficiaries.

#### *Increased attention to habitat and watershed health*

Because of the significant threat to public safety, little attention has been paid to wildlife and watershed health. RCDs are incorporating ecological need into local programs.

- In your comments at the Commission's October 2016 hearing on special districts, you mentioned methods resource conservation districts are implementing to reverse the effects of climate change and to turn tree mortality waste into useful products. Could you describe these for the Commission and explain how they could be useful beyond the tree mortality crisis? For example, you mentioned that biochar could be useful in managing agricultural waste.

#### *Healthy Soils that sequester carbon*

Work is being done throughout the country on the ability of healthy soils to sequester carbon. Locally the Marin Carbon project (an effort supported and organized through the Marin RCD with a multitude of partners) and the Carbon Cycle Institute have been leading promising research and implementing demonstration sites on specific techniques. But demonstration projects and efforts to increase soil health span through multiple agencies and partners including the latest success of CDFA to secure funding for the Soil Health Initiative and the work NRCS and RCDs have been doing for over 75 years to improve soil health, not to mention the important role of UCCE in developing appropriate technologies for farmers.

The basic thrust of the research is that significant amounts of carbon can be sequestered by increasing soil health in rangeland, ag and natural systems. By augmenting soil with amendments like compost, mulch and biochar, the soil not only sequesters the carbon from the amendments, but then also pulls atmospheric carbon into the soil to support the enhanced plant health and soil microbial communities that emerge. From one application of material, increased sequestration continues for up to a decade.

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The exciting thing about these practices is that they enhance natural systems and are not simply aimed at reducing our footprint (like putting in an energy efficient light bulb to reduce our consumption) but will actually sequester carbon that has been previously emitted. The total effect that could be achieved through solid health practices is not yet conclusive, but composting on rangeland and other natural lands shows potential to achieve significant results towards California's climate goals.

While much of the work has been completed on rangeland, the concept most likely applies to forestland as well.

#### *Tree Waste put to a good use for the environment*

Utilizing tree biomass to compost or serve as a soil amendment is an opportunity to turn tree waste into a composting material that can help sequester carbon and conserve water in the ways presented above.

The state faces 2 challenges in managing bio waste:

- 1) Tree mortality and unprecedented quantities of woody biomass from the forest.
- 2) Waste from ag fields. This includes routine activities like pruning and tree/ vine replacement. It also includes the fallowing of vineyards and orchards due to water availability and the drought.

Right now this waste primarily meets 2 fates- it is either burned in the field or left to decay. If burned it creates pollution. This is of particular concern in areas like the Central Valley with Air Pollution challenges. If left to decay, it releases greenhouse gas into the environment. It can also be taken to landfills which then fills unnecessary space and is a significant cost to farmers.

#### *Solutions:*

It would be better to put this waste to a useful end. RCDs are actively pursuing 3 options- biochar, biomass and compost.

**Biochar** is the process of creating a charcoal- like product out of woody biomass. By altering the type of input and temperature of burning, different properties are created. Biochar can be used as a soil amendment to increase water holding capacity of soil and provide nutrients. UC Davis is working on creating "designer biochars" that can act as a "prescription" for soil health and crop amendments. If this technology is developed as expected, biochars could reduce the need for chemical fertilizers. This would mean that we could use a waste stream that is currently being disposed of in place of chemical fertilizers- a product that is being created specifically for that purpose.

**Compost/ mulch**- some of the waste can be used as chip or compost to augment soils. Chip and compost increase water holding capacity and add nutrients to soil. The volume of biomass is too much to be used entirely as compost or mulch, however, in some cases having chippers on landowner properties or some chip and compost on ag fields can solve small scale problems.

**Energy**- Biomass plants can be used to turn woody debris into energy. Unfortunately, for many reasons, California has lost or is in danger of losing almost all of our biomass facilities.

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**Bio Products-** RCDs are not actively involved in this, but UC Davis and others are creating various from ag and biowaste that include “plastics” and building materials that may be able to solve many of these problems.

Tree waste has the potential to be put to good use in combating climate change and assisting in augmenting fields, but is currently not being utilized. The technology, infrastructure and science needs further development to be practical on a large scale. However, RCDs are working on small scale demonstration projects, getting biochar and biomass facilities online and finding ways to utilize more biomass for chip and mulch.

- The focus of the Commission’s first hearing is on the state, while its next hearing will be on local entities. Your vantage point is unique in working with local resource conservation districts statewide. At the local level, what are the top concerns in response to the tree mortality crisis, recovery from the crisis, and in preventing future crises? Are there gaps between the state’s response and planning process and locals’ concerns?

The state has done a tremendous job in building a response to an unprecedented crisis. As one USFS supervisor says “I wasn’t in school the day they covered what to do when the entire forest dies.” This challenge is immense and new and CALFIRE has done a great job leading this effort. The Tree Mortality Task Force led by CALFIRE has brought all levels of government and various entities together for a relatively coordinated response. Given the vast amount resources needed, they can’t do everything.

The first step was organizing existing and easily acquired resources, the next step will be filling gaps.

*Needs remaining at the local level:*

- 1) Funding for small landowners to remove trees
- 2) Funding directly to local agencies including RCDs to support the planning efforts of local tree mortality groups. The local groups understand the highest local priorities. It is critical that some of the funding from State agencies is locally targeted to allow these priorities to be addressed.
- 3) A place to take dead trees to and/or education on what to do with trees that remain on site (this may include additional log decks, mobile curtain burners (to create biochar), chippers, and other equipment.
- 4) Wide spread education campaigns to help landowners know what to do and how
- 5) Funding and coordination for work between State and Federal land and private property
- 6) Community planning- escape routes, notification systems and other ways of increasing public safety.
- 7) Critical habitat/ ecological concerns. – so far the perspective has been primarily on public safety. Very little attention is being paid to critical watersheds, ecologically significant areas, and critical habitat. Strategic efforts to protect these areas is critical. SNC, CALFIRE and the NRCS have partnered to begin this process and local RCDs incorporate these concerns into local planning, but this area has not received the attention it needs.

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Please see below for the opportunities to prevent future outbreaks.

Additionally, the Commission also would be interested in any other information that could aid its analysis of forest management in California, particularly in relation to preventing future mortality crises.

There are 5 big opportunities to prevent future outbreaks:

- 1) As mentioned above, we may have the ability to get ahead of the current outbreak by working in areas that are likely to be affected. By thinning and improving soil health on properties that are not yet affected, we may be able to attenuate the spread. “Do good in the woods when the woods are good”. Resources and education need to be spread through those areas.
- 2) There are 2 significant pests that pose a threat to the Sierras in addition to their current locations.
  - a. The Golden Spotted Oak Borer is in San Diego and Los Angeles County and is moving North. It has received very little attention and resources for containment and yet it is incredibly damaging and spreading quickly. It poses a potential statewide catastrophe event if not locally addressed and managed. This species is of particular concern because it targets healthy trees and traditional methods of building forest health may not be effective in attenuating this species.
  - b. Sudden Oak Death (moving south from Sonoma County) also has the potential to significantly impact our remaining forests.

These two species need to be contained and combatted before they cause statewide damage.

- 3) Investments in Soil and watershed health initiatives are critical to our ability to respond to the next big outbreak. This work has to occur before outbreaks in order to build resiliency and prioritize watershed concerns in preparation for crisis response.
- 4) Increasing the capacity of local agencies like RCDs gives the State the ability to solve the new dispersed resource issues.
- 5) While most of the attention on forest health has gone to the Sierras, it is important to remember that the rest of the State also has forests that could face similar fates. We have to invest in forest health in other regions in addition to the Sierras.

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