



# MARIPOSA COUNTY

Board of Supervisors · 209-966-3222



## **RESOLUTION - ACTION REQUESTED 2016-435**

MEETING: August 16, 2016

TO: The Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

RE: Letter of Support for Wagner Ridge Expansion Project

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### **RECOMMENDATION AND JUSTIFICATION:**

Approve a Letter of Support for the Mariposa County Fire Safe Council's Grant Application to the Sierra Nevada Conservancy to Complete the Environmental Review Necessary for the Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Expansion Project, and Authorize the Board of Supervisors Chair to Sign the Letter (Supervisor Smallcombe)

The existing Wagner Ridge Fuel Break is important to communities in Mariposa and Tuolumne counties. It currently is a conventional 200-foot wide fuel break covering about 200 acres; approximately 50 acres are in Mariposa County, the remainder is in Tuolumne County. The objective of the grant application is to fund the NEPA and CEQA reviews required to permit the Fire Safe Council to apply for the funding necessary to expand the width of the Fuel Break on the Merced River side of the watershed. Expansion of the Fuel Break will result in increased public safety and structure protection as well as providing a number of environmental benefits. The Fuel Break Project is a partnership among a number of public and non-profit agencies.

The Tuolumne County Board of Supervisors is expected to consider a similar letter of support at their meeting on August 16<sup>th</sup>.

### **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:**

The Board has routinely approved letters of support for issues that it believes will benefit the citizens of Mariposa County.

### **ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:**

Do not approve the letter. Individual members of the Board may write their own letters of support.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

**Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Expansion Letter of Support (DOCX)**

**CAO RECOMMENDATION**

Requested Action Recommended

  
Mary Hodson, CAO 8/11/2016

**RESULT: ADOPTED BY CONSENT VOTE [UNANIMOUS]**

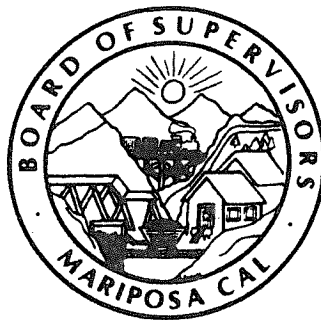
**MOVER:** Rosemarie Smallcombe, District I Supervisor

**SECONDER:** Marshall Long, District III Supervisor

**AYES:** Smallcombe, Jones, Long, Cann, Carrier

# Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 ... ROSEMARIE SMALLCOMBE  
District 2 ..... MERLIN JONES  
District 3 ..... MARSHALL LONG  
District 4 ..... KEVIN CANN  
District 5 ..... JOHN CARRIER



MARY HODSON  
County Administrative Officer

RENE LAROCHE  
Clerk of the Board

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August 16, 2016

Mr. Jim Branham  
Executive Officer  
Sierra Nevada Conservancy  
11521 Blocker Dr., Suite 205  
Auburn, CA 95603

Re: Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Expansion Project Grant

Dear Sir:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors asks that you approve the Mariposa County Fire Safe Council's grant application. The funding requested by the Council is necessary to complete the environmental documentation for the Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Project. This Project, when completed, will address the significant tree mortality along the border of Mariposa and Tuolumne counties, restore the Merced and Tuolumne River watersheds in that area, reduce the risk of catastrophic fire and increase the safety of the people who live in the small mountain communities located there.

This phase of the Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Project is intended to complete all the NEPA and CEQA review necessary for the Fire Safe Council to pursue funding for the expansion of the existing fuel break. The Wagner Ridge Fuel Break is a conventional 200-foot fuel break across the Sierras that Tuolumne and Mariposa Counties, in conjunction with the South West Inter Face Team (SWIFT), have developed and maintained. As wildfires have increased in intensity and rate of spread, fire fighters have begun to recommend that fuel breaks be widened to a minimum of 300 feet. Given the importance of this fuel break to public safety and the health of two watersheds, the Fire Safe Council is collaborating with the SWIFT, the Stanislaus National Forest, the Mother Lode Field Office of the Bureau of Land Management, CAL FIRE and the Yosemite Foothills Fire Safe Council to widen the Fuel Break to meet the new standard.

The benefits of the Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Expansion would include --

- Increased protection of Greeley Hill, Coulterville, Groveland and Buck Meadows and the people who live there
- Increased ability of fire fighters to successfully contain fires in this mountainous terrain
- Increased safety for wild land fire fighters
- Restoration of Merced and Tuolumne River watershed resilience
- Protection of existing water storage capacity through reduced erosion
- Increased carbon storage in the remaining healthy forest
- Reduction of Green House Gas and particulate matter emissions associated with wildfire
- Provide remedies in accordance with the 2015 Mariposa County Tree Mortality Disaster Declaration
- Support the Mariposa County General Plan goals:
  - 10.1.01 Preserving Agricultural Lands;
  - 11-2c Preserve the existing or potential sources of sustainable water supply;
  - 11-4 Conserve and enhance the ecosystems, plant communities, wildlife habitats, and the inherent diversity of both plant and animal species for the recreational, commercial, aesthetic and basic ecosystem needs.
- Meet the goals of the Mariposa-Yosemite IRWMP to manage and conserve forest and watershed lands for enhancement of water supply
- Support SNC's goals to 1) protect, conserve and restore the Region's physical, cultural, archaeological, historical and living resources; 2) aid in the preservation of working landscapes; 3) reduce the risk of natural disasters, such as wildfire
- Implement the State Water Action Plan by protecting important ecosystems
- Protection of wildlife habitat

We encourage you to fund this critical phase of the Wagner Ridge Fuel Break Project. Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned with any questions.

Sincerely,



John Carrier  
Board Chair