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September 1, 2004

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing to request that you veto SB 1648. Approval of this legislation would result in the well-managed Jackson Demonstration State Forest (JDSF) in Fort Bragg becoming a de facto state park. SB 1648 would re-write the management direction for this forest in a manner that is not compatible with its original enabling legislation.

SB 1648 was passed by a narrow margin of affirmative votes - in the Assembly (39-33) and the Senate (22-13). These are not overwhelming endorsements for this legislation. Interestingly, there is a great deal of opposition to SB 1648 in Mendocino County, where JDSF is located. Only a small but highly vocal minority supports the measure. It does not have broad support.

Active forest management of JDSF by Professional Foresters over the past 50+ years has been directly responsible for the restoration and enhancement of this forest. Without that management, it is unlikely that JDSF would provide the resource, environment, and recreation benefits that the county and state currently enjoy. This forest is one of the most productive in California and is a major player in significant watershed and other research activities.

Until recently the forest has been a financial asset to the State. SB 1648 will make JDSF a financial liability at a time of deep budgetary difficulty. Harvesting has ceased for the past 2-3 years because of technical errors in updating the JDSF management plan. The cessation of harvesting on this forest, in addition to the state financial losses, adds other unnecessary burdens requiring increased importation of lumber from other states and countries to satisfy the needs of California citizens. California already imports over 70% of its lumber and wood products. In most cases, that lumber comes from locations where much less stringent forest practice rules and regulations are applied, when compared to the strengths found in our Forest Practices Act.

The public already has had the opportunity to comment on the management and timber harvesting plans for JDSF. Approval of SB 1648 will result in placing restrictions on harvesting methods and other sound management opportunities. The addition of an advisory committee and an interagency technical committee to direct activities on the forest will only hinder, not help, the forward movement of appropriate management activities. Such actions by this legislation are highly inappropriate. Forest management professionals should make those management decisions.

CDF has a number of Registered Professional Foresters dedicated to the proper and sustainable management of JDSF and the other state forests. I urge you to let those trained professionals continue to manage the Jackson Demonstration State Forest by not signing the SB 1648 legislation.

Sincerely,

Robert L. Solari

Registered Professional Forester #102

