

Submitter: Rachel Freed
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Natural Resources and Wildfire
Measure, Appointment or Topic: SB75

I am writing to express my opposition to SB 75, which seeks to define "high wildfire hazard area" for the purpose of developing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) on lands zoned for rural residential uses, as well as for replacement dwellings on lands zoned for resource uses. While I understand the importance of addressing wildfire risks, I believe that this legislation could have unintended consequences that may hinder property rights and economic opportunities for residents in rural areas.

Firstly, the definition of "high wildfire hazard area" may be overly broad or vague, potentially encompassing large portions of rural land that are currently suitable for residential development. This could significantly limit homeowners' ability to build or replace dwellings on their property, effectively stifling growth and development in our rural communities. The restrictions could make it difficult for families to create affordable housing options, particularly in areas where housing is already in short supply.

Secondly, the bill may place an undue burden on property owners by imposing additional regulations and requirements for development in designated areas. Homeowners may face increased costs and lengthy approval processes, making it more challenging to navigate housing development. This could deter potential buyers and investors from considering rural properties, adversely affecting the local economy and property values.

Moreover, while wildfire safety is a crucial concern, I believe there are more effective ways to address this issue without restricting development. Emphasizing education about fire-resistant building practices, promoting community-wide fire prevention programs, and encouraging responsible land management can effectively mitigate wildfire risks while still allowing for growth and development.

Additionally, creating a one-size-fits-all definition for high wildfire hazard areas may not take into consideration the unique characteristics of different regions. Local conditions, such as topography, vegetation, and historical fire patterns, should be taken into account when determining appropriate land use and development strategies. Local governments and stakeholders should have the flexibility to develop tailored solutions that meet the specific needs of their communities.

In conclusion, while I appreciate the intention behind SB 75, I believe it is not the right approach to address wildfire hazards. I urge you to reconsider this legislation and

explore alternative methods that prioritize both wildfire safety and the rights of property owners in rural areas.