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June 23, 2026

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection  
715 P Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: Letter of Support for the “Mendocino National Forest Habitat Enhancement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, Phase I” Project - CAL FIRE Forest Health Grant (Prop 4) (#90165739)**

To Whom it May Concern:

The County of Lake is pleased to express its enthusiastic support for the Lake County Resource Conservation District’s (LCRCD’s) collaborative grant application to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)’s Forest Health Grant Program for the “Mendocino National Forest Habitat Enhancement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, Phase I” project.

In 2018 and 2020, the August and Mendocino Complex fires burned more than 90% of the Mendocino National Forest (MNF) in Lake County, including mature mixed-conifer stands and numerous residences on private inholdings. These events decimated the MNF, emitting centuries-long carbon stores and dramatically reducing these forestlands’ abilities to sequester carbon, converting entire landscapes from forests into brush fields. Protecting the remaining green islands that did not or burned at low intensity during these wildfires is imperative, as is ensuring forest persistence and community safety in this remote and under-resourced corner of Lake County. Moreover, the state- and federally listed northern spotted owl (NSO) was found in MNF as recently as March 2026. The NSO’s continued use of the forest post-fire further emphasizes the need to project and enhance habitat conditions for this old-growth associated species while initiating additional efforts to restore severely burned areas and rebuild carbon sequestration capacity.

The proposed project will directly and holistically address the above needs through the following landscape-scale treatments across more than 900 acres of federal and private lands: (1) 642 acres of green island protection and forest health improvement, including habitat quality enhancement for the NSO, in the Packsaddle/Pine Mountain Wilderness; (2) implementation of the 4.6-mile Booth Crossing shaded fuel break on private acres bordering or within the Lake Pillsbury Ranch POA (LPRPOA), which will be complemented by implementation on adjacent public acres utilizing Good Neighbor Authority match funding; (3) strategic fuels reduction efforts on the Floating 40, a U.S. Forest Service (USFS)-owned parcel entirely within the LPRPOA that poses a serious wildfire risk to adjacent homes; and (4) hazardous fuels reduction efforts in the private Rice Fork Homes, which will offer the additional benefit of improving evacuation safety for residents.

This Phase I project will also include site preparation for future reforestation activities as well as planning and environmental permitting activities for Phase II, which will include a large-scale reforestation effort to prevent further type conversion to brush fields and establish tree cover in severely burned areas. Maintenance treatments ensuring the durability of Phase I implementation activities are also included.

LCRCD has proven experience administering grant funding for forest health and wildfire resilience projects. LCRCD is actively managing a \$7.3M USFS Community Wildfire Defense Grant, which includes the application of beneficial fire across 1,100 priority acres and hazard tree removal throughout Lake County. LCRCD was also previously awarded and is nearing completion of the CAL FIRE-funded "Tree Mortality Mitigation and Public Safety in Lake County" project (Grant Agreement #5GG22117), which includes the removal of hazardous roadside vegetation along Lake County's most critical evacuation routes, among other grants. LCRCD has brought together the following federal, state, and local partners in advancing the proposed project: USFS, CAL FIRE, Lake County Air Quality Management District, Lake Pillsbury Fire Protection District, and numerous private residents of the LPRPOA and Rice Fork Homes. LCRCD, together with its partners in this multifaceted effort, brings the expertise, resources, and proven track record necessary to ensure this project's success.

This project aligns with our Vision 2028 Goal to develop and maintain a high standard of Disaster Prevention, Preparedness and Recovery, in collaboration with all community stakeholders. Given this alignment, the County of Lake is pleased to express its enthusiastic support for the "Mendocino National Forest Habitat Enhancement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project, Phase I" project alongside LCRCD and partners.

The County of Lake fully supports this collaborative project and recognizes its potential to significantly enhance valuable habitat and reduce wildfire risk in one of the most vulnerable areas in Lake County. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,  
COUNTY OF LAKE

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Chair, Lake County Board of Supervisors