

MIKE THOMPSON

5TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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September 20, 2018

Judge Andrew Blum
Lake County Superior Court
Lake County Courthouse
255 North Forbes Street
Lakeport, CA 95453

I am writing regarding the findings of the Lake County Grand Jury, especially some of its criticism of the response to recovery of Lake County to the 2015 Valley Fire.

The Valley Fire was one of the most devastating natural disasters to strike California in terms of homes and businesses destroyed and people's lives uprooted. Like every natural disaster before or since, the response to the Valley Fire was not perfect. The Grand Jury report summarizes some of the areas where the response could have been better and makes recommendations on how the recovery to future wildfires in Lake County can be improved.

The Grand Jury, however, completely missed the mark in its blistering criticism of County Administrative Officer Carol Huchingson and her team's actions regarding the Valley Fire Debris insurance collection.

I saw firsthand how Ms. Huchingson and Lake County employees worked tirelessly to assist Valley Fire victims navigate the myriad of federal and state rules governing payment and reimbursement for debris removal.

In the years since the Valley Fire, I have been impressed by the actions of the Lake County Administration to reach out to other counties and proactively explore ways on how improvements can be made to the debris removal issue.

Carol Huchingson is a public servant in the best sense of the title. She was personally impacted by the Valley Fire, but, nonetheless volunteered to spearhead the County's recovery efforts. Since becoming County Administrative Officer, Carol has worked in concert with the Board of Supervisors to make sure that the County government continues to meet the needs of the residents of Lake County.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter. If I can answer any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,

MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress