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ACR-33 Wildfire mitigation. (2021-2022)

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Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 33

CHAPTER 111

Relative to wildfire mitigation.

[Filed with Secretary of State September 07, 2021.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 33, Friedman. Wildfire mitigation.

This measure would state the Legislature's commitment to improving wildfire outcomes in the State of California by investing in science-based wildfire mitigation strategies that will benefit the health of California forests and communities. The measure would also state that the Legislature calls upon public and private stakeholders to work jointly to identify, discuss, and refine, as necessary, procedures concerning treatment of forested lands for the purpose of, among other things, wildfire risk mitigation.

Fiscal Committee: no

WHEREAS, Forests in California are increasingly vulnerable to major wildfires and droughts that threaten the social, economic, and environmental benefits they provide; and

WHEREAS, Anthropogenic climate change is one of the leading factors contributing to the increased frequency and severity of these fires; and

WHEREAS, Decades of fire suppression on California's forested lands have created ecosystems that are increasingly vulnerable to megafires; and

WHEREAS, Fire suppression efforts have been threatened by a number of economic changes; and

WHEREAS, The twin challenges of unhealthy forests and accelerating climate change are unlikely to be sufficiently addressed without state government action; and

WHEREAS, California has counted on carbon sequestration in its abundant forests to help combat climate change; and

WHEREAS, Recent fires have resulted in the emission of 91 million metric tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS, Property damage from wildfires runs in the billions of dollars annually; and

WHEREAS, In October 2017, property damages alone exceeded 9 billion dollars from the northern California fire storm; and

WHEREAS, The health impacts of smoke inhalation from these fires constitutes a major public health challenge; and

WHEREAS, The long-term economic losses that would result from an unchanged fire policy regime would affect California families and businesses; and

WHEREAS, Small-acreage family forest owners are particularly vulnerable to the environmental, economic, and health impacts of these wildfires; and

WHEREAS, Three out of five family forest owners in the West cite wildfire as their biggest concern; and

WHEREAS, Partnership between federal, state, local, nonprofit, and private-sector stakeholders will be necessary to address the scale of the problem; and

WHEREAS, The urgency of improving wildfire mitigation will only increase in the coming years due to climate change; and

WHEREAS, The current model for fire suppression in the State of California is unsustainable and poses a risk to all current and future Californians; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature is committed to improving wildfire outcomes in the State of California by investing in science-based wildfire mitigation strategies that will benefit the health of California forests and communities; and be it further

Resolved, That the Legislature calls upon public and private stakeholders to work jointly to identify, discuss, and refine, as necessary, procedures concerning treatment of forested lands for the purpose of wildfire risk mitigation, allowing family forest owners to access resources that will allow for fire mitigation on their lands, as well as maximizing awareness and engagement with existing programs and resources, and more broadly shifting the state's firefighting efforts toward a more proactive and ecological approach in order to achieve sustainable outcomes for the state's environment, economy, and the health of its people; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.