

TO: Honorable Issac G. Bryan, Chair
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Members, Assembly Natural Resources Committee

FROM: Norwood Associates, LLC

DATE: April 1, 2025

RE: AB 687 (Patterson)--SUPPORT

On behalf of our client, Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of California (IIABCal) we are writing to offer our Support for the above referenced bill.

California's forests and watersheds are facing an unprecedented crisis. Catastrophic wildfires continue to claim lives, destroy communities, and devastate our natural ecosystems. The science is clear: ecologically sound fuels reduction and prescribed fire are essential components of sustainable forest management. However, our ability to implement these critical projects at the necessary pace and scale is severely hampered by regulatory delays.

AB 687 offers a practical solution by allowing publicly funded forest health projects to utilize the same environmental review process currently available to commercial timber operations. This approach maintains robust environmental protections through the Forest Practice Rules, which are recognized as functionally equivalent to CEQA, while significantly reducing project timelines from years to months. The legislation helps California meet its commitment to treat one million acres annually by 2025 and prioritizes public safety and watershed health without compromising ecological values.

AB 687 represents a balanced approach that maintains essential environmental and tribal reviews while offering land managers a more efficient pathway to implement scientifically sound treatments. This legislation acknowledges that publicly funded forest health projects deserve the same streamlined review as commercial operations, particularly when they provide direct public benefits.

For the above stated reason, IIABCal would urge your "AYE" vote on AB 687. Thank you

Thank you.

cc: Chloe Bowman, Office of Assemblymember Joe Patterson
Lawrence Lingbloom, Chief Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Elizabeth MacMillian, Principal Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Paige Brokaw, Senior Consultant, Assembly Natural Resources Committee
Casey Dunn, Consultant, Assembly Republican Caucus
Brady Borcharding, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of the Governor