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**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA****BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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June 2, 2021

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
 United States Senate
 SH-331 Hart Senate Office Building
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

I am writing on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara in support of S. 1855, the *Wildfire Emergency Act*.

Thank you for sponsoring S. 1855 to help make wildfire protection a higher priority and to enact reforms to make our communities safer from this danger. California has experienced record-breaking fire seasons in recent years and this trend has directly impacted Santa Barbara County. The 2017 Thomas Fire, and the January 9, 2018, debris flow that resulted, devastated Montecito and other areas of the County, serving as a stark example of the direct and indirect costs of wildfires.

S. 1855 would provide additional funding and policy authorizations to help reduce these dangers. Climate change is increasing the fire risk caused by extreme heat waves and these trends are forecasted to continue. In the face of this challenge, S. 1855 would provide additional resources to manage national forest proactively and sustainably and create more resilient communities. The bill would allow FEMA hazard mitigation funding to be used for the installation of fire-resistant wires and infrastructure and for the undergrounding of wires. It would also establish workforce development programs to train forestry and fire management specialists.

The County urges expeditious consideration of S. 1855 to reduce these threats to life and safety, the destruction of homes and infrastructure, and significant and environmental and health impacts.

Sincerely yours,

Don Gilchrest
 Washington Representative

DWG: awg