

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
OF THE COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA  
REGARDING WILDFIRE PREVENTION ON FEDERAL LANDS IN CALIFORNIA  
RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_**

WHEREAS, catastrophic wildfires continue to threaten lives, property and the natural resources of the state of California; and the County of Santa Barbara in particular

WHEREAS, the insurance losses for the 2007 Fire Season in Southern California were \$1.6 billion and; the estimated loss of employment from the 2007 Southern California fires was in excess of \$500 million;

WHEREAS, California is approximately 50% publicly owned land and 50% privately owned land but many rural counties have substantially higher percentages of federally owned land;

WHEREAS, the County of Santa Barbara has over 50% acres of federally owned land which is 50% of the total land in the county;

WHEREAS, on July 1, 2008, a human-caused fire on Los Padres National Forest Service land in the mountains above the City of Goleta was ignited; and burned 9,443 acres (50% Federal Lands, 50% Non-Federal Lands)

WHEREAS, on July 4, 2007, a human-caused fire on Los Padres National Forest Service land in the County of Santa Barbara was ignited; and burned 240,207 acres of which 95% was on Federal lands;

WHEREAS, California has over 43 million acres of federal land, much of which has not been adequately managed to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfire;

WHEREAS, two of the three largest wildfires in California in the past 100 years began on federally-owned land;

WHEREAS, millions of dollars are spent each year fighting fires in our national forests;

WHEREAS, the escalating costs of fighting fires on federal land over the last 10 years has significantly diminished the available resources for the critically needed prevention measures that can minimize these catastrophic fires;

WHEREAS, the resources to manage the federal lands to reduce fire risk would be a small investment relative to the skyrocketing costs of fire suppression;

WHEREAS, the State of California has made significant strides towards reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires on state and private lands such as ranking lands as to the level of fire hazard, requiring 100 feet of defensible space around homes, requiring ignition-resistant materials on all new construction that is built in any Fire Hazard Severity Zone within State

Responsibility Areas, any Local Agency Very-High Fire Hazard Severity Zone, or any designated Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Area, and many other things to not only address preservation of life and property but the environmental risks of large scale wildfire as well;

WHEREAS, the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires in Santa Barbara County will result in harmful secondary environmental effects, including diminished air and water quality, impacted watershed, increased air pollutant emissions, and threatened habitats of sensitive wildlife species;

WHEREAS,, approximately *eighty percent* of the State's developed surface water supply originates on watershed lands within our rural counties. California's residents use a portion of this water for domestic, commercial, agricultural, industrial, recreational, and other beneficial uses and these rivers, lakes, and watershed lands also serve as habitat for hundreds of species of fish and wildlife;

WHEREAS,, assessments of the Gap Fire burn area have revealed extensive damage to seven major watershed systems in the unincorporated area of the county, the City of Goleta, and the Santa Barbara Airport;

WHEREAS,, the detrimental effects on these watersheds affect all of California, not just rural California; and Santa Barbara County in particular

WHEREAS, the increased risk of catastrophic wildfires significantly impacts the levels of greenhouse gases in Santa Barbara County;

WHEREAS, the mitigation of wildfire emissions is vital to reach the goals stated in the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (AB 32); and

WHEREAS, the Draft AB 32 Scoping Plan, released in June 2008, fails to adequately address the need to mitigate wildfires and the importance of quantifying and modeling wildfire emissions on private, state, and federal lands;

WHEREAS,, there continues to be a widely recognized extremely high risk of catastrophic wildfires in Santa Barbara County due to unnaturally heavy fuel loads and the early drying of wild land vegetation;

WHEREAS,, the County and other entities within the county are expending significant resources to recover from and address conditions of extreme peril to life and property that exist in this County due to damages created by the Gap Fire.

WHEREAS, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors calls for immediate measures to be taken to prevent imminent catastrophic wildfires;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED AND DECLARED** by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara that there is an ongoing emergency due to the threat of wildfire in California, that the state and the local governments have taken many steps to resolve this issue and now requests that the Governor take an active role at the federal level to demand that the United States Forest Service take action in California's federal wild and forest lands to do the prevention and maintenance work required to mitigate the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

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PASSED, APPROVED AND ADOPTED by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Santa Barbara, State of California this 23<sup>rd</sup> day of September 2008, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

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Salud Carbajal, Chair, Board of Supervisors  
County of Santa Barbara

ATTEST:  
MICHAEL F. BROWN  
CLERK OF THE BOARD

APPROVED AS TO FORM:  
DENNIS A. MARSHALL  
COUNTY COUNSEL

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy

By \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy County Counsel