



September 3, 2024

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
 1021 O St, Suite 9000  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

**Re: SB 675 (Limón) – Request for Signature**

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the 55 undersigned climate, agricultural, wildfire prevention, conservation, and public health organizations, we write to request your signature on Senate Bill 675 (Limón), which will better integrate prescribed grazing into some of the state's existing wildfire prevention and resilience programs and plans.

Wildfires and their secondary impacts from smoke, landslides, and flooding pose a growing threat to the health and safety of our communities. Wildfire smoke has also become the second largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the state in recent years.<sup>1</sup> To stop this vicious climate/wildfire cycle, the state must advance the full range of strategies available to create more fire resilient landscapes.

Prescribed grazing<sup>2</sup> is a nature-based wildfire mitigation tactic with co-benefits including improved invasive species management, native plant and habitat restoration, carbon sequestration, and the production of local food and fiber.<sup>3,4</sup> Prescribed grazing complements other fuel reduction activities by reducing fine fuels and ladder fuels before prescribed burns, maintaining reduced fuel loads after fuel treatments, and/or being implemented in areas where other fuel treatments are considered too costly, dangerous, or inappropriate for the ecosystem.

We applaud your administration's inclusion of prescribed grazing in the Wildfire Risk Reduction section and Grasslands section of the recently released Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets.<sup>5</sup> However, state-level guidance and strategies to scale

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<sup>1</sup> Up in smoke: California's greenhouse gas reductions could be wiped out by 2020 wildfires (Jerrett et al, 2022). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envpol.2022.119888>

<sup>2</sup> Public Resources Code Section 4004.5 defines prescribed grazing as “the lawful application of a specific kind of livestock at a determined season, duration, and intensity to accomplish defined vegetation or conservation goals.”

<sup>3</sup> Understanding Working Rangelands: The Benefits of Livestock Grazing California's Annual Grasslands (Berry et al, 2015). Available at: <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8517.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Cattle grazing reduces fuel and leads to more manageable fire behavior (Ratfliff et al, 2022). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3733/ca.2022a0011>.

<sup>5</sup> California's Nature-Based Solutions Climate Targets (2024). Available at: <https://resources.ca.gov/-/media/CNRA-Website/Files/Initiatives/Expanding-Nature-Based-Solutions/Californias-NBS-Climate-Targets-2024.pdf>

prescribed grazing to achieve those targets has been limited within existing state wildfire prevention and resilience programs and planning processes. SB 675 would address this gap in three ways.

First, the bill requires the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection's Range Management Advisory Committee (RMAC), in consultation with the Department of Fish and Wildlife, UC Cooperative Extension experts, and fire ecologists, to develop guidance for the growing number of cities, counties, fire safe councils, and homeowners associations who are interested in using prescribed grazing as a wildfire risk reduction tool. This guidance will provide these local and regional entities, many of which have never managed prescribed grazing projects before, with best management practices for planning, community engagement, implementation, and monitoring prescribed grazing to reduce wildfire risk and improve ecological outcomes.

Second, the bill encourages CalFire and the Department of Conservation to consider and incorporate the aforementioned guidance into their respective Fire Prevention Grants Program and Regional Forest and Fire Capacity Grant Program, both of which have funded prescribed grazing projects. The bill also clarifies that the installation of fencing and watering improvements, which can significantly lower the cost of prescribed grazing and make it more economically sustainable, may be included in prescribed grazing projects funded by the Fire Prevention Grants Program.

Third, the bill directs the State Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force, in consultation with the RMAC, to develop a strategic plan by 2025 for expanding the use of prescribed grazing, with a focus on reducing wildfire risk in and near fire-threatened communities, and to consider incorporating prescribed grazing in the Task Force's update to its Wildfire and Forest Resilience Action Plan in 2026.

We must use every tool in the toolbox to reduce wildfire risk and steward California's diverse ecosystems. Senate Bill 675 would make meaningful steps to advance one of those tools through existing state bodies, programs, and planning processes. We respectfully request your signature of Senate Bill 675.

Sincerely,

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