

COUNTY OF EL DORADO

Board of Supervisors

330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5652
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GEORGE TURNBOO
SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT II

January 14, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
45th President of the United States

Dear President Donald J. Trump,

Please help the victims of the 2021 Caldor Fire who were forgotten by the Biden Administration immediately following promises to provide FEMA Individual Assistance. As the chair of the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, I am still working with residents of Grizzly Flats, California, to help them continue to rebuild their lives after losing everything. A number of residents are still homeless because failed insurance and wildfire policies have caused them to now own charred properties only. Please help the survivors of the Caldor Fire by issuing FEMA Individual Assistance as President, which we are aware that you have been gracious enough to do with past California wildfires.

Grizzly Flats, California, was founded around 1850 as a mining and logging town. One of the more commonly known lumber-based businesses that originated near Grizzly Flats was the California Door Co, which began in the area known as Caldor. Decades later, when government policies shut down mining and logging industry, Grizzly Flats changed into a humble community of nature loving Americans seeking a rural lifestyle. Residents that remained and moved to Grizzly Flats were generally Veterans, seniors on fixed incomes, young families and people seeking an affordable way to reconnect with nature. Government policies promoted forest growth without significant management spurred on by environmental groups with dogmatic views of forest management. The US Forest Service (USFS) identified a dangerous fire hazard area near Grizzly Flats as the Trestle Project that studies showed would lead to wildfire disaster if left untreated or unmanaged and could cause a complete loss of Grizzly Flats. While the community members of Grizzly Flats Fire Safe Council worked hard to clean up the community perimeter, they were restricted from accessing USFS lands, which were left untreated and unmanaged by USFS.

When the Caldor Fire initially erupted in August of 2021 in the area of the Trestle Project, the US Forest Service delayed the response to the fire, and even called off response when it was being enacted. A few days went by before proper response took action and by that time the Caldor Fire had grown into a catastrophic wildfire. Eventually, the Caldor Fire would completely destroy Grizzly Flats, California, and then move eastward toward South Lake Tahoe, California, to burn 221,835 acres of the Eldorado National Forest with \$1.2 billion estimated in damages as it progressed. When Joe Biden and Gavin Newsom visited with Caldor Fire response crews, they made it apparent that they felt it was a “federal issue” and promised FEMA assistance to those impacted. Once the residents returned to begin the clean-up effort, FEMA began to deny and delay assistance, even with letters of support from Gavin Newsom, Senators, Congressman and

State and Local leaders representing El Dorado County. Locals began to believe that their votes for Trump in 2020 and signing the recall petition for Gavin Newsom, had led to a political segregation similar to what North Carolina experienced in the wake of Hurricane Helene. Government regulations and policies have led to the demise of Grizzly Flats, California. When the industries left the area, the reason for living in the area changed to enjoying a rural lifestyle. The mismanagement of forest lands surrounding Grizzly Flats, such as the Trestle Project, have led to further government regulations regarding wildfire. In response to a perceived increase in hazards necessitating increased government regulations, the insurance industry has been increasing insurance costs and requirements. The fire insurance costs and requirements have skyrocketed beyond the means of most residents in Grizzly Flats, California. Many residents were either uninsured or underinsured as a result. Once the Caldor Fire had reached catastrophic size and entered Grizzly Flats, the residents lost everything as they had to evacuate in a panic. The residents had believed that the wildfire would be put out before it reached them and there were few warnings from USFS concerning the fire on their land. Caldor Fire survivors share stories of evacuating as their homes were engulfed in flames and escaping with only the clothes on their back. Later when survivors sought to question the Biden Administration and USFS response to the Caldor Fire, they found there were roadblocks preventing them from having the ability to get answers in a court of law. We need serious policy changes, like removing the USFS "Let It Burn" policy, by the federal agencies that manage forests and industries, including the ability to take legal action against environmental groups that stop forest management projects and to bring back logging to El Dorado County while stopping the importing of lumber from other countries so local lumber industries can thrive again here, and across America.

As the El Dorado County District 2 Supervisor representing the survivors of the Caldor Fire, I would like to invite you to tour Grizzly Flats, California to meet the residents still living there in RVs and trailers hoping to rebuild and see the devastation that remains. I would also like a full investigation of the Biden administration response to the Caldor Fire and subsequent denial of FEMA Individual Assistance. We may share a distant ancestor Ethel Alfreda Trump, which speaks to my connection with El Dorado County, as my ancestry first arrived in 1838 and has remained. The Caldor Fire survivors still need the FEMA Individual Assistance they were promised. Please help the community of Grizzly Flats in any way possible as they continue to rebuild their lives after losing all in the 2021 Caldor Fire. Learn more about the 2021 Caldor Fire by watching the 60 Minutes documentary on YouTube linked below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEjWfLPpQwY>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'George Turnboo', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

George Turnboo
District 2 Supervisor
County of El Dorado

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Board of Supervisors

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GEORGE TURNBOO
SUPERVISOR, DISTRICT II

January 21, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
45th President of the United States

Dear President Trump,

We need a change in the federal and state policies regarding the foothills of California. The mismanagement of the Eldorado National Forest has led to overgrown vegetation and deteriorating forest roads, which increase the potential for a catastrophic wildfire to occur. Environmental groups are largely to blame for the lack of forest management and have largely shut-down the logging industry in El Dorado County. We need common sense policies to allow our region to be protected from the costs of wildfire and mismanagement, so residents can feel safe living in a rural area.

The Trestle Project was a plan by the United States Forest Service (USFS) to manage an overgrown section of federal land near Grizzly Flats, California, that had been identified as being a considerable wildfire hazard. A study conducted by USFS to identify the project had concluded that the Trestle Project was necessary to complete to avoid a wildfire large enough to destroy the town of Grizzly Flats. Unfortunately, environmental groups like the Sierra Club and the John Muir Association, opposed the Trestle Project and even used the court system to prevent USFS from completing the necessary project. The Trestle Project was not completed by the time the 2021 Caldor Fire grew to catastrophic size and destroyed the town of Grizzly Flats as predicted by the USFS study. Residents began seeking remedy from the USFS for their response to forest management and wildfire, since the Caldor Fire began on federal lands. The residents found that the USFS had immunity from prosecution regarding both the failed forest management project and their lacking response once wildfire erupted.

Environmental groups are able to have their day in court to prevent forest management projects, but residents who suffer the results of prevented forest management are left with little recourse. Residents filing claim forms with the USFS have been denied, and seeking a day in court seems impossible as the USFS enjoys some form of legal immunity from their actions. There exists a dichotomy between environmental groups being able to seek legal remedies against a federal agency, and victims of wildfires who have no recourse against mismanagement by the same federal agency. Ideally, the environmental groups that indirectly cause forest management projects to be postponed would be held legally responsible for the effect of creating potentially dangerous wildfire conditions (see bookmarked pages of included packet). These same environmental groups have also impacted the logging industry as part of forest management by

using politics to advocate dogmatic policies and largely caused tremendous job loss and wildfire hazards in the El Dorado County region of California.

El Dorado County needs industrial logging to return to our region to ensure proper forest management, increased wildfire response and good wage paying jobs. Federal regulations and incentives can be changed to provide better economic conditions for our regional logging industry. Part of the problem we face is with bureaucratic decisions made by people who are out-of-touch with the regions or industries they are affecting. By resurrecting the logging industry, there would be many benefits to our state and national economy. For example, logging workers at local sawmills would stop work and deploy to any wildfire in the region as an effort to protect their product and prevent fire from spreading. Logging would provide immediate forest management and increase the operability of forest roads required by logging industry to move around in the forest. Additionally, each tree that is removed from the forest allows further drainage of water into waterways, because tree roots soak up considerable water and water stuck in tree canopies evaporates before it reaches the ground. The lumber generated from logging helps to provide good paying American jobs and avoid the need to import lumber from other countries.

California has many challenges when it comes to common sense policies, due to the dogmatic politics of the populations around cities. The dense population centers in California dominate the political landscape and force residents in rural areas to abide by laws and regulations designed by people who lack understanding of rural regions. There seems to be a political push to prevent people from living in rural areas, whether by dogmatic beliefs, economic destitution or improper response to rural natural disasters. California leadership seems to lack the common sense needed to provide solutions to rural residents, and instead push for policies that make rural living difficult.

Please help the residents of El Dorado County, California, to overcome the political roadblocks at the state and federal level, so they can enjoy improved federal policy regarding forest management and legal recourse for accountability. Our region has endured increasing wildfires dangers due to a lack of common sense and a deliberate obfuscation of logging industry wisdom. Residents in El Dorado County enjoy a rural lifestyle, and we hope to protect their way of life through common sense policies that provide freedom and understanding over dogmatic political ideologies. We will need the help at the federal level to overcome the unique challenges we face to protect local residents so they can feel safe living in a rural region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'G. Turnboo', with a stylized, flowing script.

George Turnboo
District 2 Supervisor
County of El Dorado