



Eaton Fire Survivors Network



Extreme Weather Survivors Action Fund



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April 1, 2026

Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris
Chair, Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8120
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: AB 1774 – Wildfire Safety and Accountability Act – SUPPORT

Dear Chair Petrie-Norris,

The undersigned consumer, health, environmental, labor and civic organizations write in strong support of [AB 1774](#), which requires independent audits of utility wildfire mitigation spending to ensure funds are fully utilized before additional financial burdens are placed on Californians through rate increases.

Wildfire mitigation spending is one of the primary drivers of rising utility rates in California, where residents already pay some of the highest electricity costs in the nation. Yet current oversight mechanisms have allowed utilities' wildfire mitigation plans to be routinely approved without sufficient scrutiny, resulting in excessive spending with limited evidence of improved safety outcomes. This lack of accountability has contributed to skyrocketing costs for consumers without delivering the level of wildfire prevention Californians deserve.

Independent audits are a common-sense solution to ensure that funds collected from ratepayers are being used effectively and as intended, and the need for strong oversight is clear:

- One 2021 independent audit commissioned by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) found that Investor-Owned Utilities **could not account for \$2.5 billion of the \$6 billion in wildfire mitigation spending** authorized over a two-year period (2019–2020), **while identifying billions more in potentially improper spending, including concerns about double recovery for the same programs across multiple years.**
- Despite these findings from its own third-party audit, **the CPUC still allowed utilities to recover the full \$6 billion from ratepayers.**
- This failure to enforce accountability highlights a [systemic breakdown](#) in oversight and underscores the urgent need for AB 1774's independent audit requirement.

AB 1774 provides a necessary safeguard to protect ratepayers and ensure that wildfire mitigation investments deliver real results. **This bill promotes transparency, fiscal responsibility, and public safety by requiring an independent audit of prior wildfire-mitigation expenditures to verify consistent, accurate spending before utilities may recover additional wildfire-related costs from ratepayers.**

For these reasons, we respectfully urge your AYE vote on AB 1774.

Sincerely,

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Environmental Scientist
Ballona Wetlands Institute

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