

Written testimony draft in support of Assembly Bill 1
To The Assembly Committee on Natural Resources and the Assembly Committee on Appropriations
By Kate Mason, Student State Policy Analyst, Saving the Sea
April 26, 2026

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kate Mason, and I am a state policy analyst with Saving the Sea, a student-run group dedicated to protecting our environment and natural resources. As part of our policy research this semester, our team conducted a rigorous review of wildlife-related legislation, including AB 1, to ensure our testimony reflects detailed analysis and environmental priorities that center communities. Assembly Bill 1, also known as the Megafire Prevention and Resilience Bill, establishes a statewide system for megafire prevention and forest resilience to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and enhance long-term land management outcomes. The system reduces wildfire risk by expanding prescribed-fire capacity, developing vegetation-management projects, and supporting collaboration between local and state agencies. These methods reduce fuel loads and increase forest resilience, which in turn reduces megafire risk. This legislation is especially crucial for communities in high-risk areas, where fuel buildup and finite resources increase the destructiveness of fires.

AB 1 supports collaboration, transparency, and long-term planning among agencies specializing in emergency response, forest health planning, and wildfire prevention. The bill also broadens vegetation-management capacity, ensures communication between agencies, and ensures that communities in high-risk areas are taken care of. These actions help reduce fuel loads, improve forest resilience, and safeguard communities most at risk of wildfire. With the establishment of a more transparent and consistent statewide foundation, AB 1 ensures that agencies are better equipped to respond promptly to emerging wildfire conditions. This disciplined approach is important to make California's wildfire challenges more scalable. For instance, AB 1 strengthens communication between agencies, allowing emergency responders to respond to crises more quickly and improving community safety.

The bill also supports a more egalitarian approach to megafire prevention by ensuring that vulnerable communities have access to the resources needed for mitigation. AB 1's prioritization of long-term planning and coordination between agencies helps smooth the implementation of prevention efforts across areas, rather than relying on reactive or segmented approaches. For example, AB 1 ensures that communities at risk of megafires are prioritized by providing support through early-warning systems, vegetation clearing, and buffer zone enhancements. By emphasizing statewide unity and transparency, AB 1 ensures that at-risk communities receive timely and effective help. These factors make AB 1 a step towards a stronger and more secure California.

Saving the Sea advocates for efforts like AB 1 that support California's ability to protect high-risk communities and address wildfire risks driven by climate change.

Sincerely,
Kate Mason, State Policy Analyst