



June 11, 2024

The Honorable Isaac Bryan, Chair
Assembly Natural Resources Committee
1020 N Street, Room 164
Sacramento, CA 95814

Support for Senate Bill 1101 (Limón): fire prevention, prescribed fire

Dear Chair Bryan and Members of the Committee:

The American Lung Association supports Senate Bill 1101 (SB 1101, Limón) to increase opportunities for – and better inform – use of prescribed fire in California. The Lung Association supports prescribed fire under certain conditions as a tool to mitigate wildfire risk and reduce harmful smoke impacts, and we support SB 1101 to better plan and utilize opportunities for the appropriate use of prescribed fire.

Wildfires have become an increasing and alarming threat to lung health in California, exposing millions of people to [fine particle pollution](#) and occasionally “hazardous” levels of air pollution in recent years. Particle pollution associated with smoke episodes is known to contribute to a wide range of health consequences, health emergencies and premature death.

Prescribed fire is the careful burning of vulnerable areas under safe, controlled conditions to prevent dangerous buildup that could escalate a wildfire into a catastrophic fire. When implemented under the right conditions, including favorable meteorological conditions and wind patterns that allow smoke to move away from sensitive areas (e.g., populated areas, hospitals, schools), prescribed fire can reduce the frequency and severity of wildfires and lower the harmful air quality and health impacts when wildfires do occur.

State and local air district expertise, resources, outreach tools and local meteorological knowledge are critical components of public health protection when prescribed fire is deemed an appropriate tool. The Biden administration’s wildfire commission [report](#) recently noted the importance of working within existing clean air regulations as prescribed fire becomes a more necessary tool, noting “opportunities to work within the Clean Air Act and the associated regulatory systems and processes to accommodate both increased use of beneficial fire and protection of public health from smoke impacts.”

Currently, state contracting requirements can act as a barrier to utilizing available windows for prescribed fire use by requiring lengthy bidding processes that cannot

move as quickly as appropriate burning conditions might emerge. SB 1101 would remove standard state bidding requirements to better allow for the use of carefully planned and permitted use of prescribed fire as a tool to reduce wildfire risk factors, similar to current practice for emergency response during wildfires.

SB 1101 would also require that by January 1, 2026, Cal Fire conduct mapping of potential fire boundaries across jurisdictions to support fire response and to plan for prescribed fires into the future. In addition, the legislation would require annual reports from Cal Fire on the severity of recent fires as well as community safety and other reporting information.

The American Lung Association supports SB 1101 to better enable prescribed fires under planned, predictable conditions that minimize harmful smoke exposure and reduce catastrophic wildfire health risks. Please contact me with any questions at William.Barrett@Lung.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "William Barrett".

Will Barrett
Senior Director,
Nationwide Clean Air Advocacy