

Wildfires, Drought, and Climate Change's Impact on Tree Mortality

*A joint hearing with the Assembly Natural Resource Committee
and
Assembly Budget Subcommittee on Resources and Transportation*

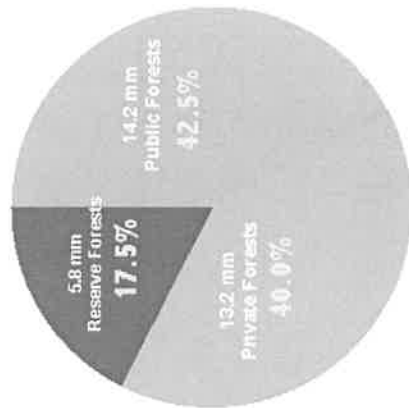
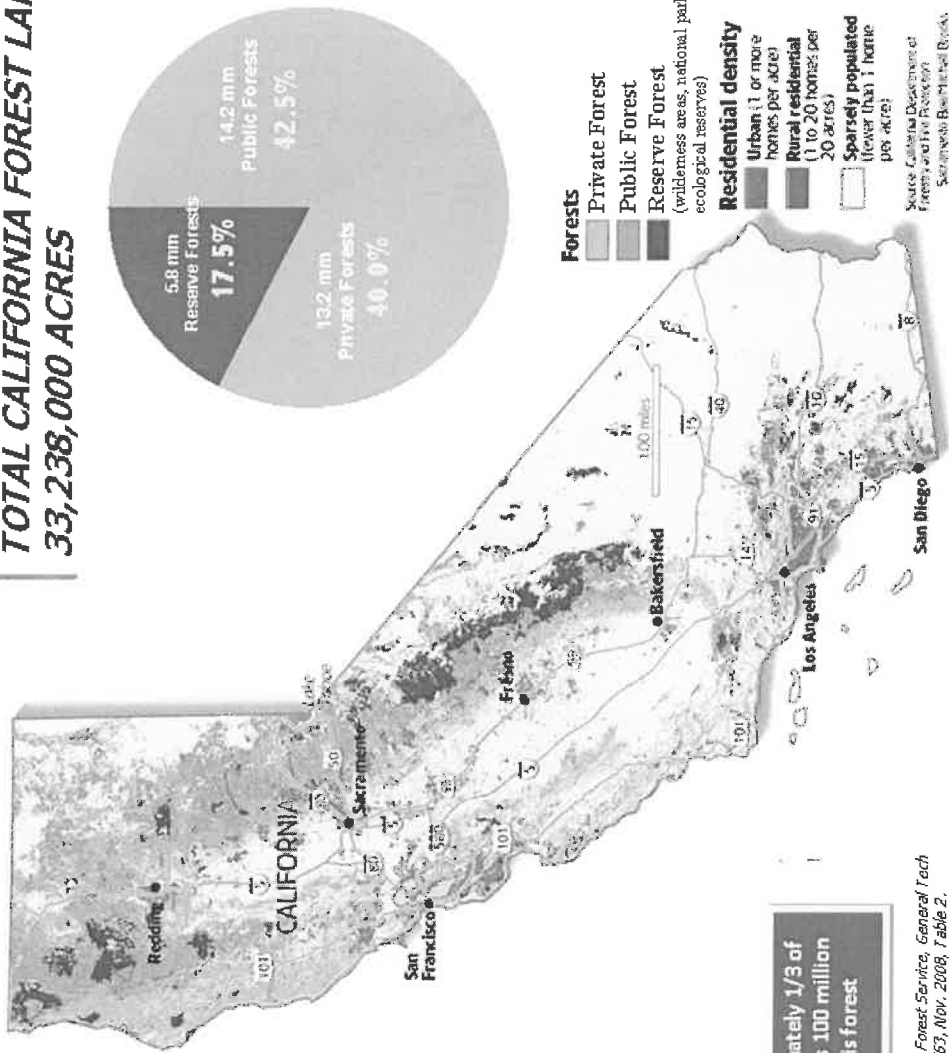


February 22, 2016

David Bischel, President
California Forestry Association

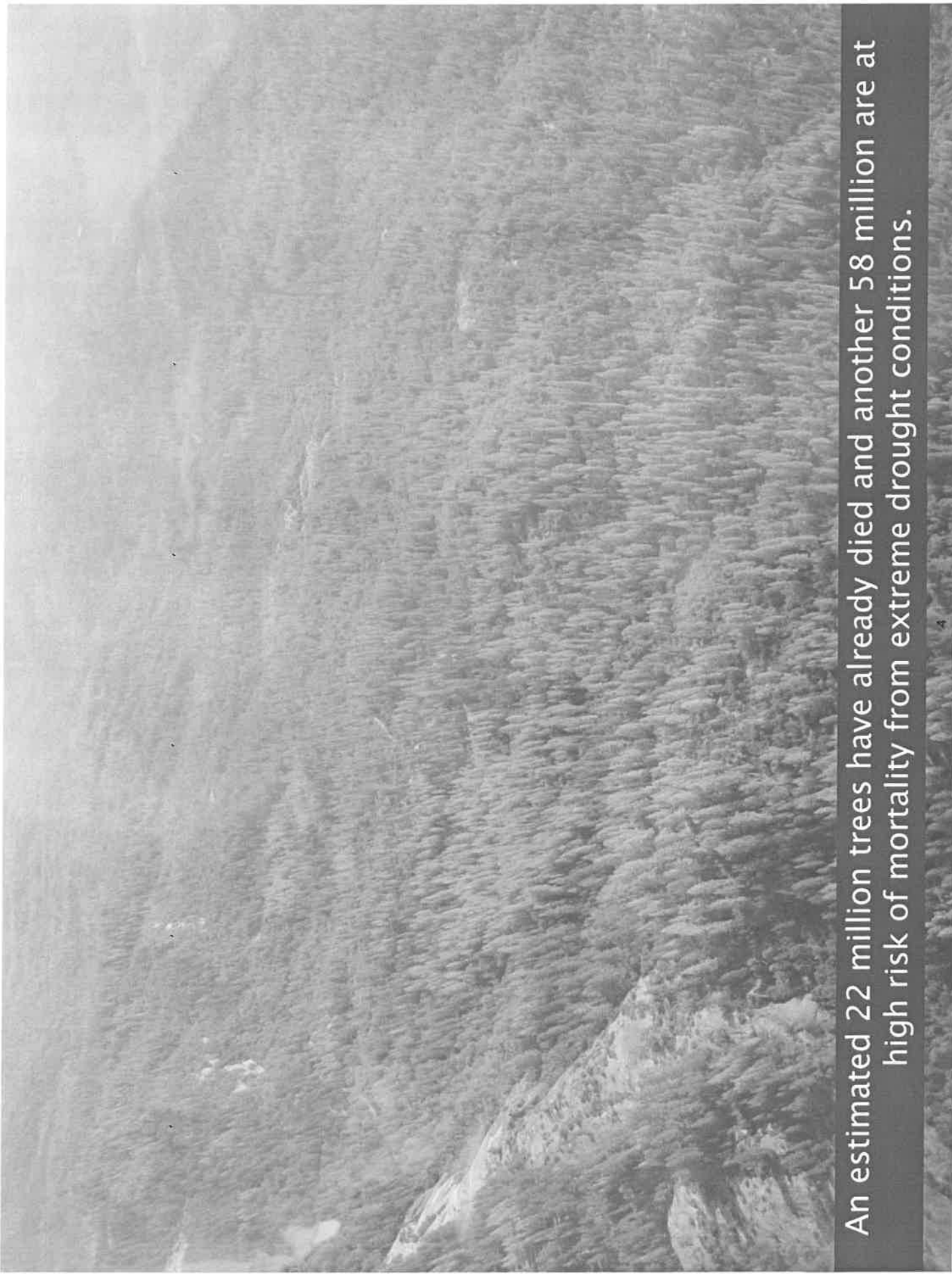
A breakdown of California forest ownership

**TOTAL CALIFORNIA FOREST LAND
33,238,000 ACRES**



- More than 7 million acres of California's public forests are overly dense and serve as a wildfire risk.
- There are 266 trees per acre on a landscape that only has enough water to support 40-100 trees per acre





An estimated 22 million trees have already died and another 58 million are at high risk of mortality from extreme drought conditions.

Wildfire and drought threat

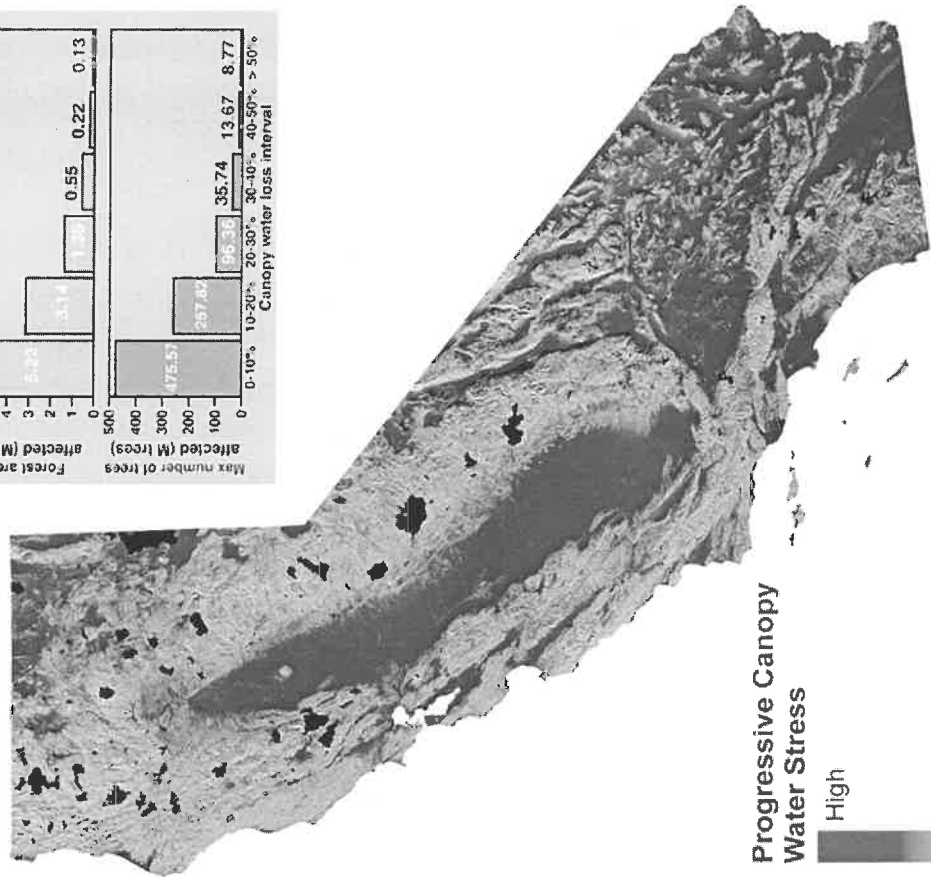
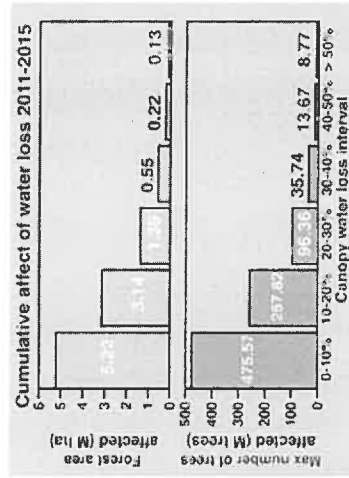


Fig. 6. Progressive forest canopy water stress for the period 2011-2015, computed as the total average CWC loss for the study period. Inset graph indicates the cumulative effect of water loss on the number of trees affected (M trees) and the forest area affected (M ha) affected in different CWC loss classes. Black areas indicate fire scars reported between 2011 and 2015 by the US Forest Service (2).

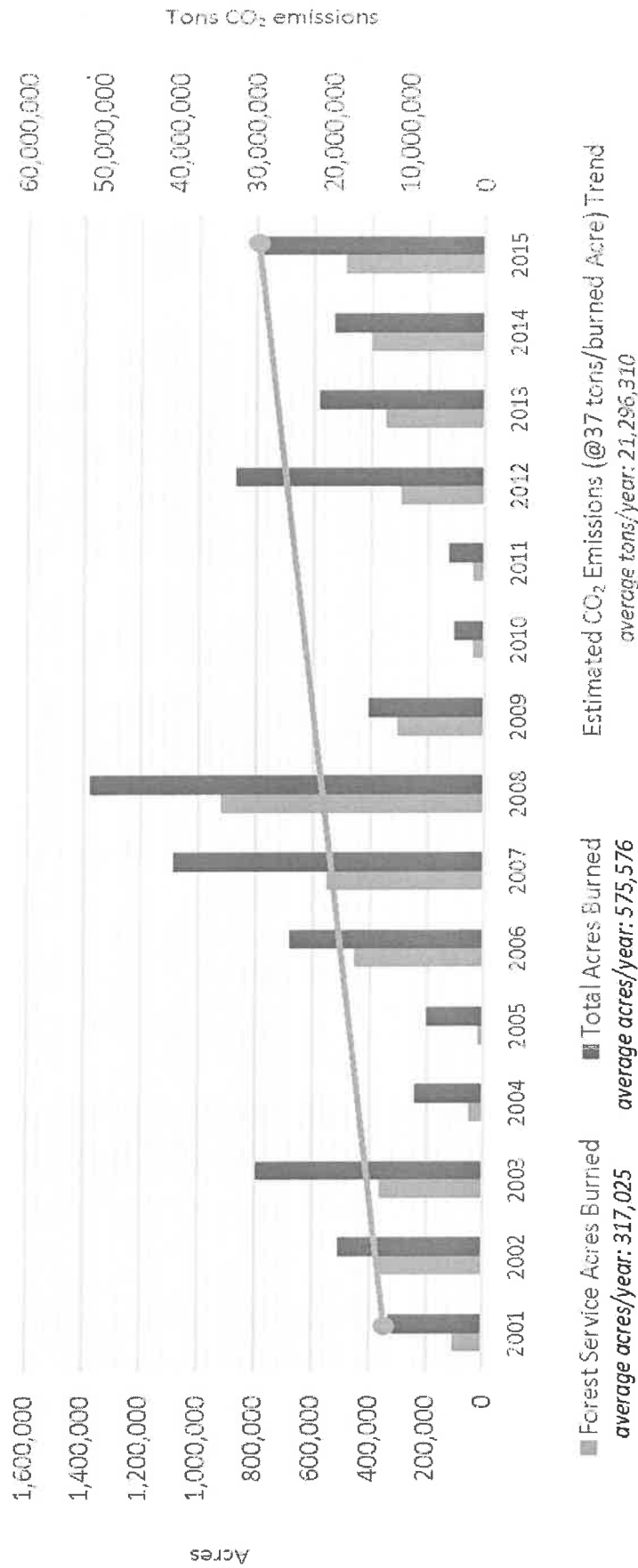
Wildfire intensity is growing

- Average annual acres burned between 2001 - 2010: 575,576 acres per year
- Intensity is dramatic. Now 33% of all acres burned are considered high-severity.
- High severity fires change the chemistry of the soil, making it nearly impossible to absorb water or grow new trees naturally.



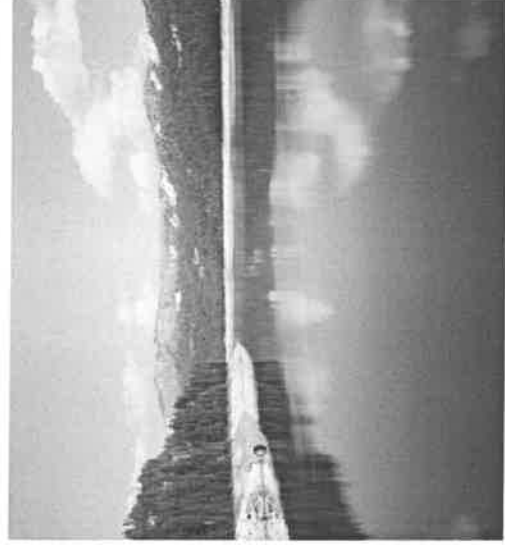
Wildfire is trending upward forcing the release of more GHG emissions

Wildfire in California
Total Acres Burned vs. Forest Service Acres Burned



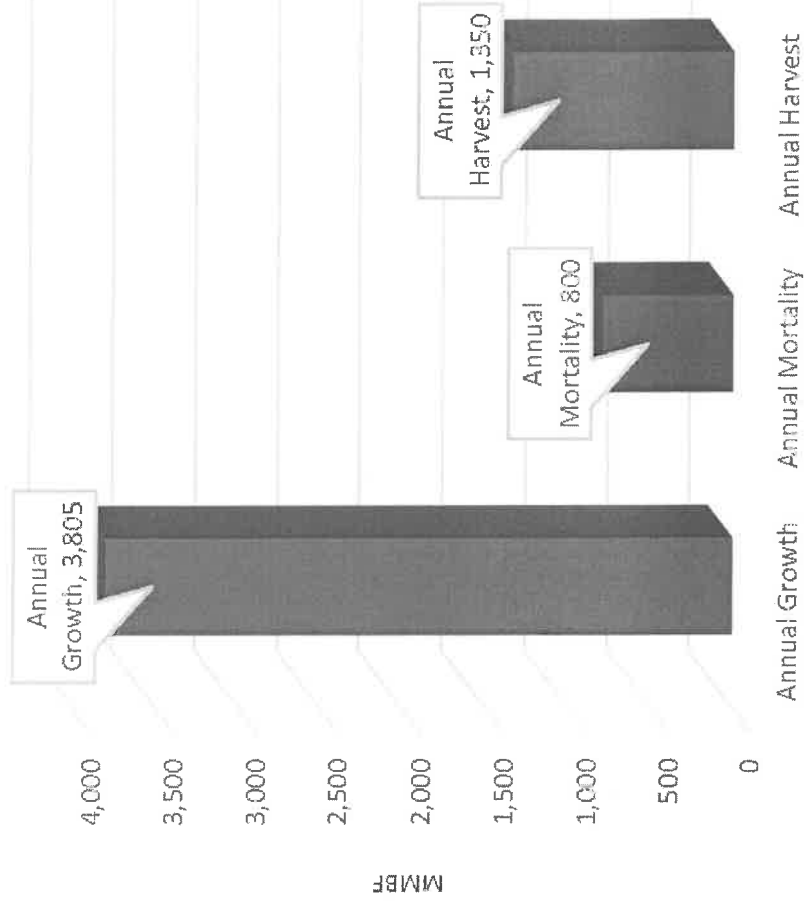
Water quality and sedimentation

- Sediment increase following wildfire is up to 1,200 times normal sediment rates.
- Erosion impacts wildlife in watersheds as well as the quality of drinking water supplies.



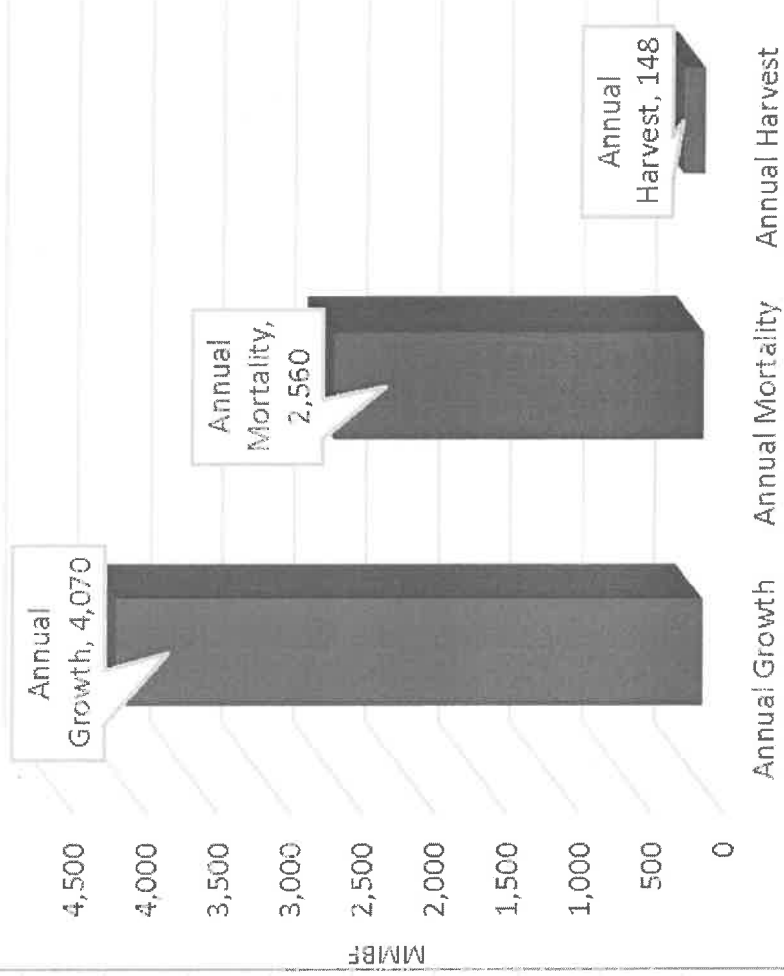
We grow more trees than are harvested or killed

Private Timberland Growth, Harvest, Mortality
Timberland = 7,492,900 acres



PNW FIA & BOE Data, 2001-2010

Public Timberland Growth, Harvest, Mortality
Timberland = 9,635,200 acres



PNW FIA & BOE Data, 2001-2010

PREDICTED CLIMATE CHANGE FOR THE CENTURY

3-11 degree temperature increase by end of this century

Longer, hotter, drier summers

Up to 90% reduction in Sierra snowpack

Up to 53% increase in large wildfires

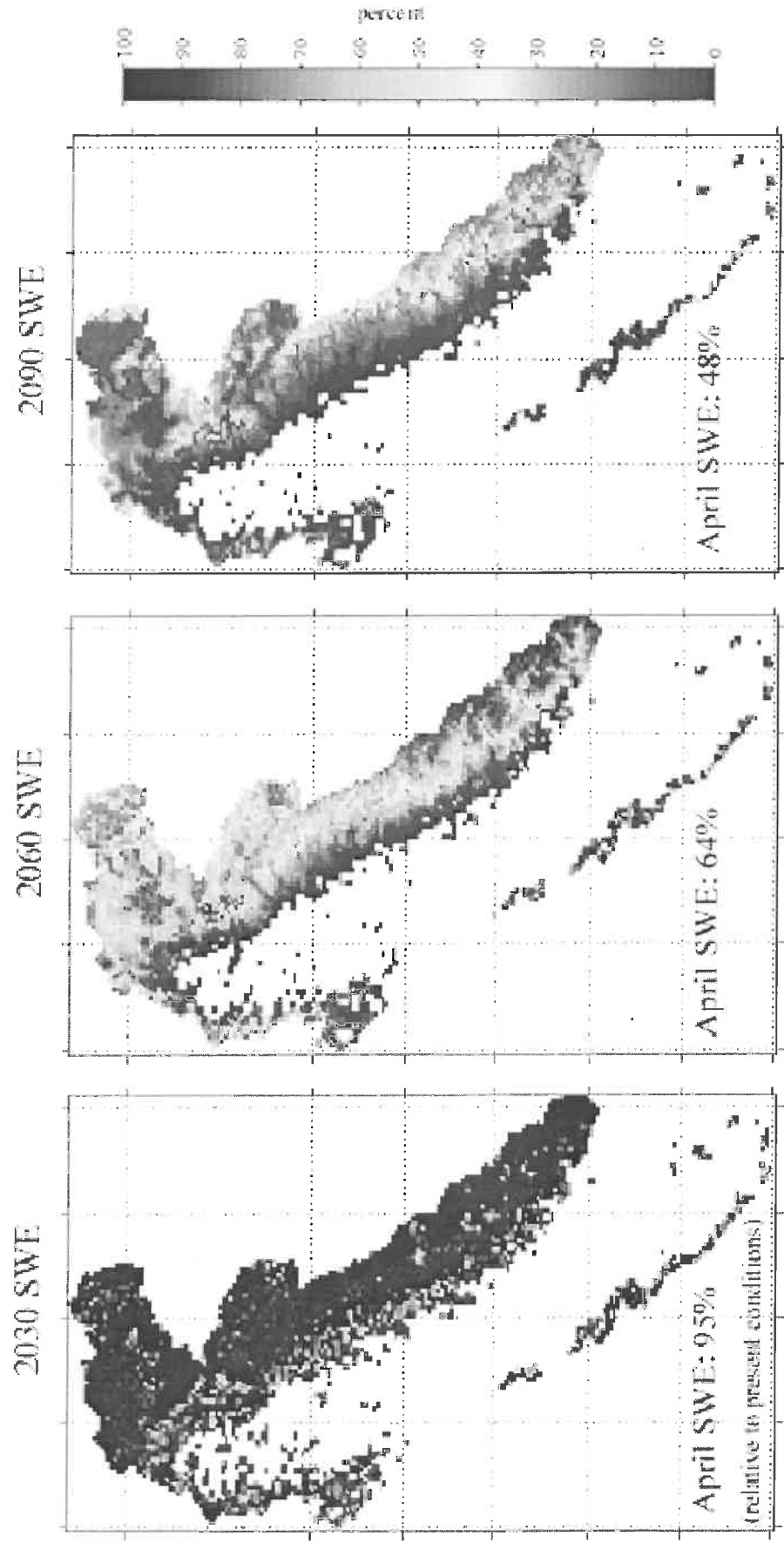
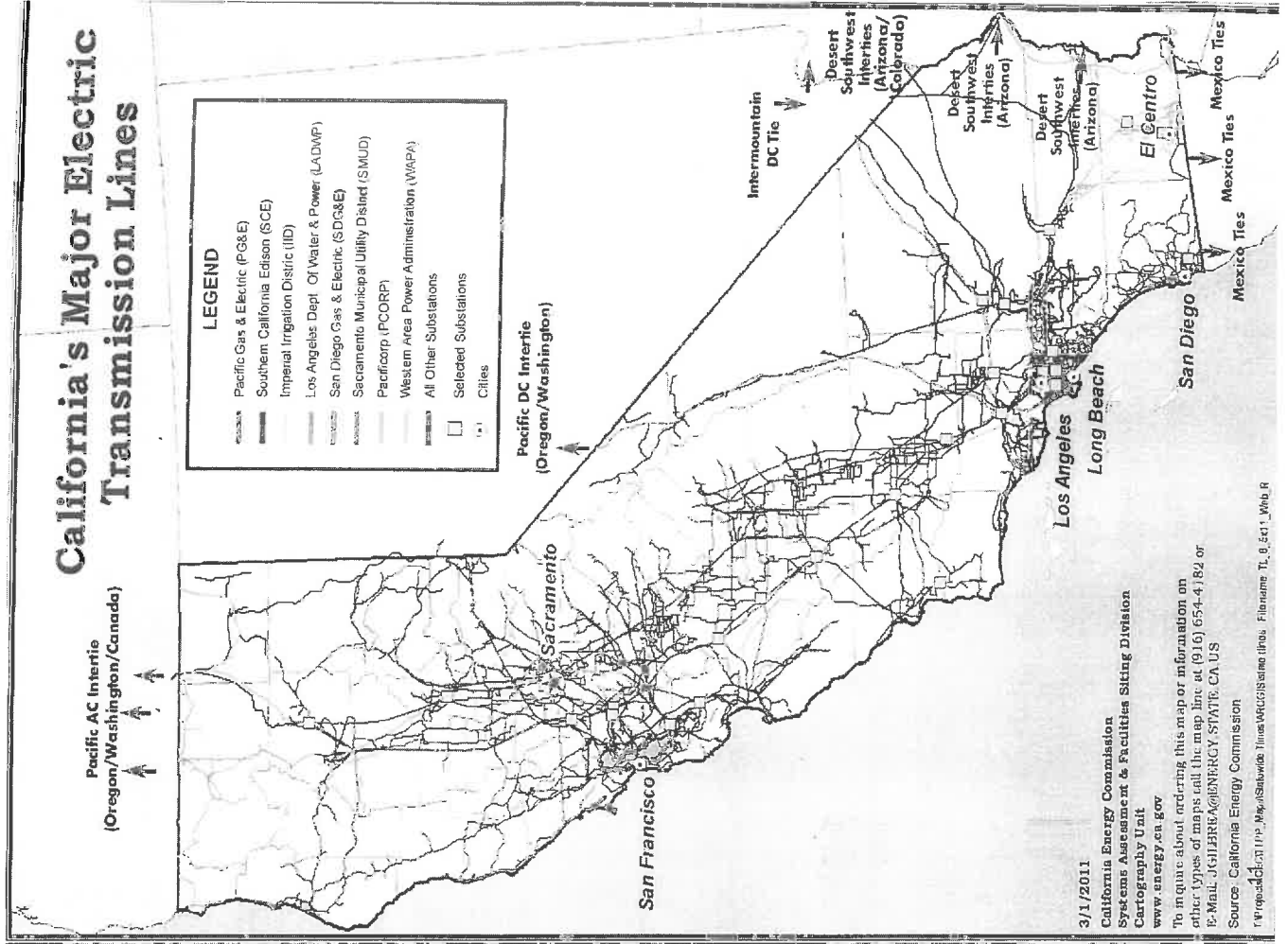
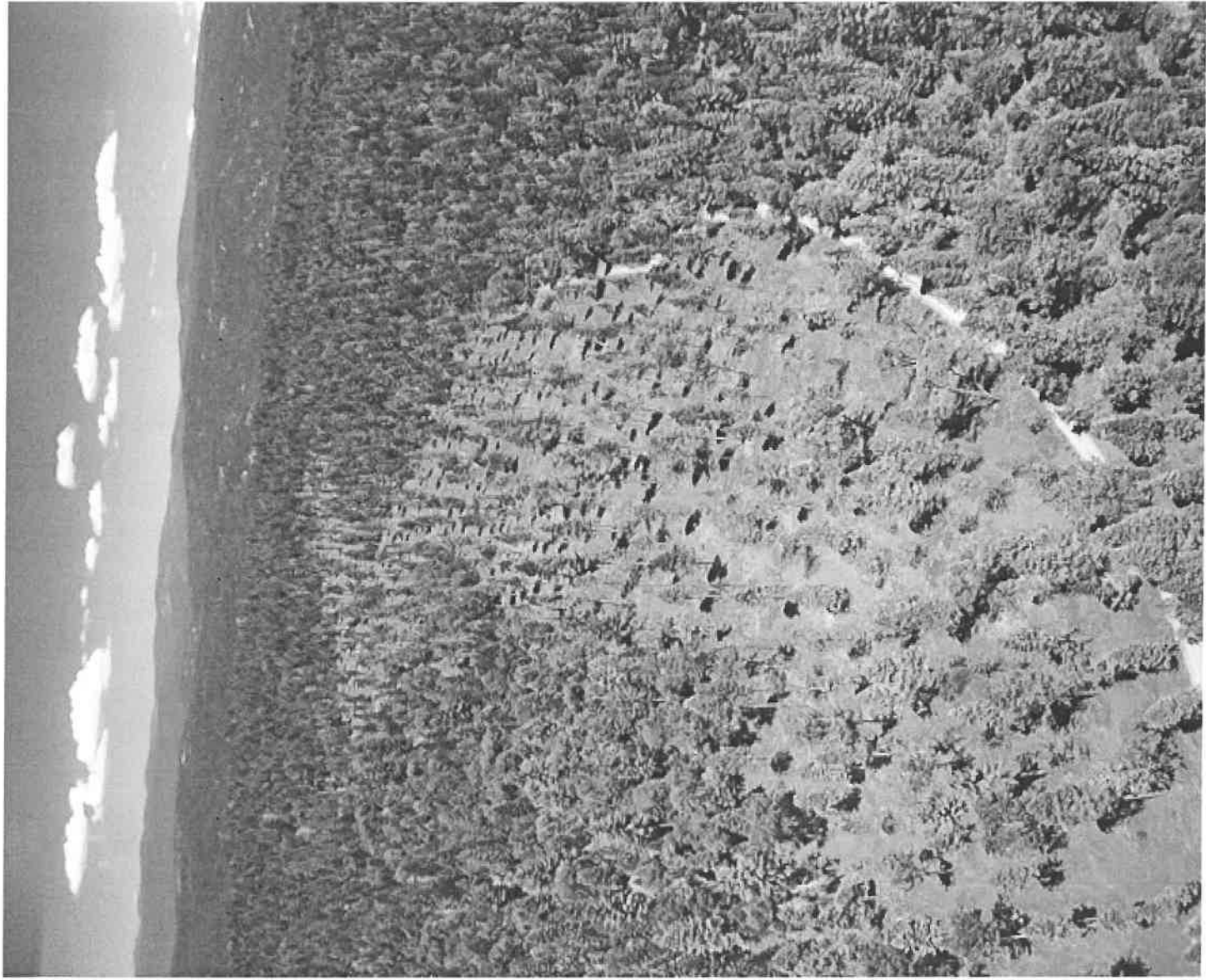


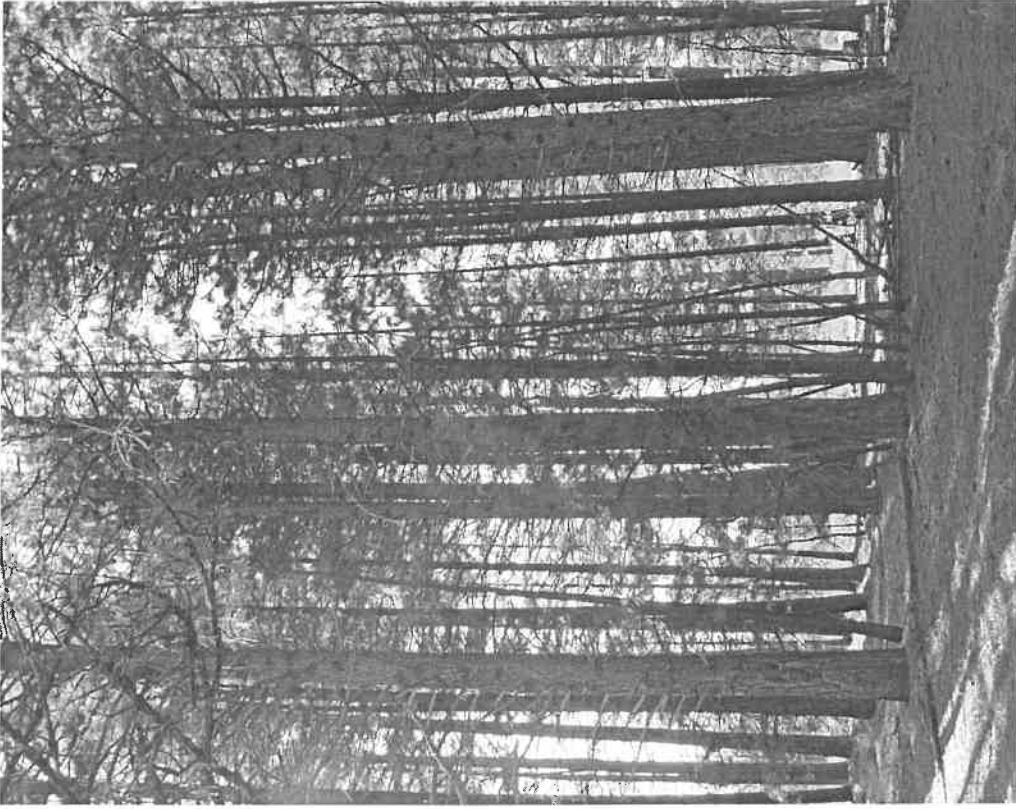
Figure 3. Simulated snow water equivalent (SWE) under a projected temperature increase for the periods 2020-2039, 2050-2069 and 2080-2099, expressed as a percentage of average present conditions.

Our network of key infrastructure including highways, railroads and utilities are simultaneously at risk to wildfire and a source of wildfire ignition.





Creating a network of shaded fuel breaks can protect key infrastructure and provides defensible zones for firefighters.



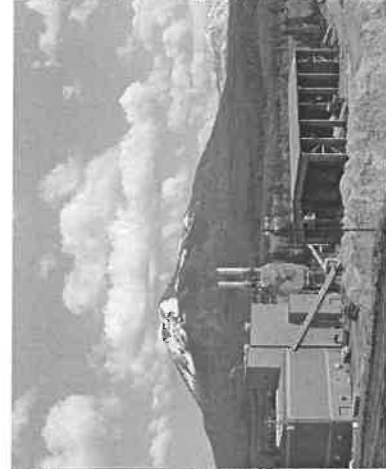
Before thinning



After thinning

Fuel reduction helps safeguard the environment and the economy

- Coordination of fuel reduction projects helps maintain local job base, contractors and infrastructure.
- In California, more than 55,000 people are employed in the forestry industry and/or related fields.
- Many rural communities rely on these living wage jobs.
 - Since 1981, 119 wood processing mills have closed
 - Since 1990, 44 biomass facilities have closed



“If high-severity fire continues to increase in concert with area burned, increasing areas of old forest will be lost, emissions will rise, and fewer large diameter conifers – which store the most carbon and play a variety of other keystone ecological roles – will be retained”

Dr. Hugh Safford, UC Davis research expert on trends in wildfire severity

CARMEL J. ANGELO
Chief Executive Officer
Clerk of the Board



COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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February 9, 2016

The Honorable Jay Obernolte
State Capitol, Room 4116
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: SUPPORT ASSEMBLY BILL 1642 (OBERNOLTE)

Dear Assemblyman Obernolte,

On behalf of the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors, I am pleased to report that our Board has decided to support AB 1642, which would increase the payment due date of the Fire Prevention Fee from 30-days from the date of assessment to 60-days.

Created by the Legislature and Governor as part of the 2011 Budget, the Fire Prevention Fee charges property owners \$152.33 for each habitable structure located in a State Responsibility Area (SRA), with a \$35 reduction if they live within the boundaries of a local fire protection district. About 700,000 rural Californians receive a yearly Fire Prevention Fee bill, which is due 30-days from the date on the notice. Additionally, the SRA provides a 30-day period to dispute the fee by filing a petition for redetermination. If a taxpayer misses the filing deadline to appeal the assessed liability, they must first pay the fee in full and file a claim for refund. In Mendocino County, 17,385 parcels of land were billed for the Fire Prevention Fee in 2015.

Due to the rural nature of those being billed, many individuals do not receive their bills in a timely manner. Many of these individuals are on fixed incomes, making it nearly impossible for them to pay their Fire Prevention Fee by the 30-day deadline. The limited time frame can make obtaining assistance and documentation by the deadline difficult.

Increasing the payment due date of the Fire Prevention Fee from 30 to 60 days will ensure greater compliance with the law by giving all owners of habitable structures in an SRA more time to receive their bills. AB 1642 will also give those taxpayers on fixed incomes more time to adjust their budgets.

For these reasons, the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors supports AB 1642.

Sincerely,

Dan Gjerde, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

cc: The Honorable Mike McGuire, Senator
The Honorable Jim Wood, Assemblymember

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