

Information regarding California's State Responsibility Area Fee or "Fire Tax"

CalFIRE's budget has a \$50 million dollar hole, and state lawmakers are raiding the pockets of rural Californians to fill it. In 2011, the state Legislature pushed through a budget bill that created a new fee on all homeowners living in the State Responsibility Area (SRA). This effort was done without any opportunity for public input and was quickly signed by Governor Jerry Brown and implemented by the Board of Forestry in January 2012. If you live in the SRA, you could be getting a bill from the state for as much as \$150 in August 2012.

Why the Fee is Unfair

CalFIRE is a statewide agency serving the entire population of California. In fact, the agency's most expensive activities occur in urban areas where residents won't pay an additional penny into CalFIRE's budget. While the fee bill promised that monies would go back to SRA residents for CalFIRE prevention activities and grants to local fire prevention efforts, the state now admits that the fee will result in no grant money until at least 2017 because the funds will be eaten up by administrative costs at the state level. The state can't guarantee fee-payers will get any extra service for their money, especially in areas where fire prevention is done by local districts.

What YOU Can Do to Help the Fee Get Repealed

Many consider the fee an illegal tax that state lawmakers, including the Governor, are using to make up for their own poor budget decisions. Rural County governments have been fighting the SRA fee every step of the way with the help of statewide organizations like the Regional Council of Rural Counties and the California State Association of Counties, but their efforts haven't been enough to stop the unfair fee. Citizens like you CAN make the difference! The state needs to find a fair way to fill CalFIRE's budget hole, and not do it on the backs of rural Californians. Should we add something about the appeal process? Write Governor Brown and let him know that the SRA fee is unfair, and needs to be repealed! Send your letters to Governor Brown at:

Governor Jerry Brown
c/o State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

You can also e-mail the Governor here:
<http://govnews.ca.gov/gov39mail/mail.php>

If constituents would like to seek reimbursement for this illegal tax, please go to hjta.org or <http://hjta.org> click on the fire tax banner, and follow the instructions provided.