January 7, 2025

Golden State Finance Authority

1215 K Street, Suite 1650

Sacramento, CA 95814

SENT VIA EMAIL: ceqacomments@gsfahome.org

**Subject: Comment Letter – Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Golden State Natural Resources Proposed Forest Resiliency Demonstration Project**

To Whom it May Concern:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors is writing to provide comments and our full support for the Golden State Natural Resources (GSNR) proposed Forest Resiliency Demonstration Project. GSNR is a nonprofit organization, established by rural counties in California, including Siskiyou, to address catastrophic wildfires. To address this issue, rural counties, researchers, and state and federal policy call for large-scale proactive fuel reduction projects to improve forest health and fire resiliency. However, limited outlets for this overgrown biomass present a hurdle for implementing fuel reduction projects.

To help resolve this issue, the Project will gather and process excess biomass into wood pellets for use in renewable energy generation. To achieve this, if implemented, two wood pellet processing facilities would be developed, one in Tuolumne County and the other in Lassen County. Once pellets are produced, they would then be transferred by rail to the Port of Stockton for international shipping.

As detailed in the Frequently Asked Questions for this project, it is supported by the U.S. Forest Service through a 20-year Master Stewardship Agreement signed with the Forest Service for all eighteen national forests in Region 5. In addition, the Forest Service has expressly acknowledged that this project will have the following benefits:

* Increase the number of acres of forest land treated substantially over the next twenty years.
* Decrease forest fuels, resulting in enhancing forest resiliency and reducing the risk of uncharacteristic catastrophic wildfires and benefitting air quality in both rural and urban California.
* Restore ecological/watershed functions through forest restoration activities resulting in improved watershed conditions resulting in cleaner and more plentiful water.
* Enhance wildlife habitat.
* Enhance public safety for residents, visitors, communities and infrastructure.
* Provide an economical solution to the large-scale removal of biomass from the state’s forests.
* Enhance carbon sequestration.

In addition to the forest health benefits, the project is estimated to create 8 full-time jobs in Stockton, 55 full-time jobs in Tuolumne, and 65 full-time jobs in Lassen, as well as numerous supply chain jobs such as trucking and in-forest workers. GSNR has established contracts with trade organizations and industry businesses to perform pre-planned, best-practice forest treatments and to transport the biomass to the processing facility, providing additional jobs and economic development. GSNR also plans to partner with community colleges to train local students to perform in forestry and transportation jobs and will help promote the expansion of broadband infrastructure and other public services and benefits to nearby rural communities.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our support to this project, and we look forward to its full implementation.

Sincerely,

Nancy Ogren

Chair, Board of Supervisors

cc: Senator Megan Dahle

Assemblymember Heather Hadwick

Rural County Representative of California (RCRC)

California State Association of Counties (CSAC)

Shaw Yoder Antwih Schmelzer & Lange

Klamath National Forest