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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0501

November 16, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Governor Newsom,

I am writing you in regards to your administration's recent decision to close the Devil's Garden Conservation Camp outside Alturas, in Modoc County, California. Along with seven other locations, this camp has been marked for closure as a direct result of the California State Budget for 2020-21. Given the steep challenges that we have faced from wildfires over the past several years, it is inappropriate to cut the budgets of institutions which protect our communities. The decision to close Devil's Garden Conservation Camp is ill-conceived given the lack of other fire camps nearby that may be able to pick up the weight.

All of California understands the difficult fiscal climate that government agencies are operating in this year. However, losing Devil's Garden will require Modoc County to rely on Antelope Conservation Camp in Susanville - which is likely more than a two-hour drive during an active wildfire season. If the limited connections to Susanville are closed, then Sugar Pine Conservation Camp must be relied upon, despite the drive approaching three hours in an active wildfire season. As you are hopefully aware, tens of thousands of acres have burned in Modoc County in recent years, and much of the area remains prone to lightning ignitions.

I am aware that your budget requires the eight identified fire camps to be closed by the end of December this year. Before that time arrives, I am asking that you reconsider the approach being taken by the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and maintain a presence at Devil's Garden. More importantly, if you are unable to identify another solution to this issue, you must fully explain the decision, including the specific cost savings and any contributing factors. I look forward to continuing to engage with you on Devil's Garden, forest management, and wildfire recovery.

Sincerely,



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress

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