



June 29, 2026

The Honorable Anna Caballero

California State Senate

1021 O Street, Suite 7620

Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Senate Bill 1153—Disaster preparedness: urban retail water suppliers and public water systems: wildfire—SUPPORT (As Amended June 22, 2026)

Dear Senator Caballero,

On behalf of the City of Santa Rosa, I am writing in support of Senate Bill (SB) 1153. This bill would require urban retail water suppliers that serve areas designated as having a high or very high fire hazard severity to incorporate incident-specific wildfire response procedures into their disaster preparedness plans. The bill also clarifies that a public water system's inability to maintain water supply or pressure during a wildfire does not constitute a substantial cause of resulting damages, and that public water systems are not required to be designed, constructed, or maintained for wildfire defense or suppression.

Few communities understand the devastating impacts of wildfire as acutely as Santa Rosa, which lost thousands of homes during the 2017 Tubbs Fire and continues to face significant wildfire risk. SB 1153 strengthens water system resilience by requiring practical, locally tailored emergency planning, including identifying critical infrastructure, coordinating with local emergency responders, assessing backup power needs, and developing customer communication strategies. Importantly, these requirements recognize the operational, financial, and staffing constraints faced by water suppliers.

SB 1153 also provides critical legal clarity regarding the role of public water systems. Water systems are designed to provide safe, reliable drinking water—not to function as wildfire suppression infrastructure. By confirming that water suppliers are not liable for wildfire damages solely because they could not maintain water supply or pressure during a catastrophic wildfire, the bill protects the City of Santa Rosa and its ratepayers from unwarranted liability while helping preserve affordable water rates. At the same time, the bill maintains accountability by preserving liability for ordinary negligence.

CITY COUNCIL
100 Santa Rosa Avenue, Room 10
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
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For these reasons, we are pleased to support SB 1153 and thank you for your leadership on this most important issue. Should you have any questions, please contact our legislative advocate, Dane Hutchings, with California Public Policy Group at 916-974-9270.

Sincerely,

Mayor Mark Stapp

City of Santa Rosa

*Thank you for your
attention to this issue!*
Mark

CC: Members and Staff of the Assembly Environmental Safety and Toxic Materials Committee

Members and Staff of the Assembly Judiciary Committee

The Honorable Chris Rogers, Assembly District 2

The Honorable Damon Connolly, Assembly District 12

The Honorable Mike McGuire, Senate District 2