

Letter: Brown needed to sign SB930

To the community,

On Sept 19, I called on Gov. Jerry Brown to sign Senate Bill 930, urging his immediate signature on Senate Bill 930 to reinstate penalties for aggravated arson. The urgency legislation would reinstate provisions which were permitted to sunset on Jan. 1, 2014.

Brown signed the bill a day later.

The law authorizes increased penalties for criminals who commit large-scale, devastating arson crimes like the King Fire that is currently raging out of control through the Pollock Pines area.



Vern Pierson

Under the provision which lapsed on Jan. 1, 2014, a person convicted of aggravated arson, which includes arson causing \$7 million in damage (including fire suppression costs), is subject to a penalty of 10 years to life in prison. To be clear, due to the constitutional prohibition against ex post facto laws, a person who commits arson is only subject to the penalties that are in place at the time that the offense is committed. Thus, the portion of the law that was permitted to sunset, specifically that suppression costs may be included in damage calculations, will not apply to the King Fire arson

case.

The bill contains an urgency clause, so its provisions will take effect immediately upon the governor's signature. Given that we in California are in the fourth year of a severe drought and in the midst of fire season, I respectfully joined with the authors of this bill and requested the governor's immediate signature for SB930. I sent a letter to the governor requesting the same.

Here is a copy of the letter.

Vern Pierson, El Dorado County district attorney