

Letter: Important to vote yes on H

To the community,

Voting yes on Measure H helps to transform Meyers and the county into one of the many fire-adapted communities sprouting up around the country. An additional \$100 per household is actually a sound investment considering the staggering cost of catastrophic wildfire.

The creation of a healthy forest through fire hazard reduction protects us from catastrophic wildfire, saving our families, our homes, and our way of life in Tahoe. It also supports small local businesses and is extremely cost effective compared to the cost of wildfire.

Fuels reduction costs \$1,000-\$2,000 an acre. According to the U.S. Department of the Interior's Wildland Fire Management Program Benefit-Cost Analysis, firefighting costs alone run at around \$3,000 an acre for fires between 10 and 100 acres. The Angora Fire at 3,100 acres cost taxpayers nearly \$7,500 an acre to extinguish. These figures do not include major economic costs such as infrastructure damage, loss of tourism, community health problems, and the destruction of community homes and quality of life. The Angora Fire caused \$150 million in damages. That equates to almost \$50,000 an acre additional impact.

The cost of catastrophic wildfire is staggering, especially since it causes additional impacts from carbon dioxide release, soil erosion, watershed damage, and wildlife displacement. By funding Lake Valley Fire Protection District's wildfire education and fuels reduction program, Measure H will protect our neighborhoods from the dangers of wildfire and save the community money in the long run.

A recent study estimated that wildland fires cost between two to three times as much as the cost to reduce hazardous fuels. The Mokelumne Watershed Avoided Cost Analysis, conducted by the Nature Conservancy, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, and the U.S. Forest, also documented the environmental gains a community receives from fuels reduction. Essentially, fuels reduction simulates what fire would do naturally in our ecosystem without posing a threat to our community. The benefits of this include the following: healthier and more mature stands of trees, reduction of invasive pest and plant species populations, improved habitat for large mammals, reduced soil erosion, healthier watersheds and riparian environments, increased carbon storage from larger tree stands, cleaner air, and a reliable source of renewable energy.

In the end, our community has the opportunity to be on the leading edge of fire prevention and environmental stewardship while also saving a substantial sum of money. Living in the forest carries with it responsibility. Make an investment in the future of our community by voting yes on Measure H.

Citizens for a Fire-Adapted Community – Yes on Measure H