



August 10, 2026

The Hon. Gavin Newsom, Governor
State of California
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. John Laird, Chair
California Senate Budget Committee
1020 N Street, Room 502
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. Monique Limón,
President Pro Tempore
1021 O Street, Suite 8518
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. Jesse Gabriel, Chair
California Assembly Budget Committee
1021 O Street, Suite 8230
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Hon. Robert Rivas, Speaker
California Assembly
1021 O Street Suite 8330
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom, President Pro Tempore Limón, Speaker Rivas, Senate Budget Committee Chair Laird, and Assembly Budget Committee Chair Gabriel:

We write to request your assistance in maintaining wage parity for sheep and goat herders in California. This is necessary to maintain the wildfire risk reduction services goats provide throughout the state.

In 2023, the Legislature passed SB 143. That bill included Section 20, which amended Labor Code Section 2695.4 to clarify that the same minimum monthly wage and labor protections for sheep herders should apply to goat herders and herders caring for both types of animals. However, SB 143 also included a sunset provision that would terminate parity on July 1, 2026, and directed the Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) to report to the Legislature by January 1, 2026 on the employment of sheep and goat herders.

As a result of the sunset, goat grazing businesses are now required to pay goat herders \$240,000 per year along with providing free housing, food, and cell service. If wage parity is not restored, current wage levels will make goat grazing economically infeasible. Homeowners'

associations, fire safe councils, and local park districts, cannot afford to pay the high wages goat herders would now require.

As you may be aware, the [DIR report](#) necessitated by SB 143 was published on March 30, 2026, and found that **“All stakeholders [ranchers, herders, and worker advocates] agreed that the same alternative minimum monthly wage should apply to sheep and goat herders** because the workers and work are similar and often overlap.”

California’s leaders have recognized the value of prescribed grazing in a number of ways. In 2024, the Newsom administration published nature-based climate solution targets, which included prescribed grazing. Later that year, the Legislature unanimously passed, and the Governor signed SB 675 (Limón). That bill required prescribed grazing to be incorporated into California’s wildfire resilience strategy. In 2025, the State Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force established a Prescribed Grazing Working Group, which published a brief on expanding prescribed grazing for wildfire resilience in California. In June 2026, the Task Force included “Expand and institutionalize prescribed grazing as a regional fuel management strategy” in its draft California Wildfire and Landscape Wildfire Resilience Action Plan for 2026-2031.

Failure to find a solution to this issue will result in the sale or slaughter of tens of thousands of sheep and goats, the loss of hundreds of California jobs, and the decline of noxious weed abatement and wildfire fuels reduction services provided in neighborhoods, communities, parks, and open spaces across California. Sheep and goats will become unavailable for the increasingly popular practice of prescribed grazing for wildfire fuels reduction. This practice is in many cases safer, more affordable, environmentally friendly, and more effective than the alternative of pesticides and fossil-fuel powered machinery. We respectfully urge you to act to ensure parity in the wages of sheep and goat herders.

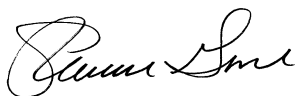
Respectfully,



Melissa Hurtado
16th Senate District



Megan Dahle
1st Senate District



Shannon Grove
12th Senate District



Catherine Blakespear
38th Senate District

Roger Niello
6th Senate District

Lori D. Wilson
11th Assembly District

Christopher Cabaldon
3rd Senate District

Juan Alanis
22nd Assembly District

Rosilicie Ochoa Bogh
19th Senate District

Esmeralda Soria
27th Assembly District

Ben Allen
24th Senate District

Heather Hadwick
1st Assembly District

Marie Alvarado-Gil
4th Senate District

Damon Connolly
12th Assembly District

Kate Sanchez
40th Assembly District

Michelle Rodriguez
53rd Assembly District



Tim Grayson
9th Senate District



Buffy Wicks
14th Assembly District



Carl DeMaio
75th Assembly District



Suzette Valladares
23rd Senate District



Jesse Arreguin
7th Senate District



Josh Hoover
7th Assembly District



Steven Choi
37th Senate District



Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
16th Assembly District



Jeff Gonzalez
36th Senate District



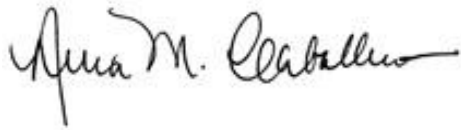
Laurie Davies
74th Assembly District



Leticia Castillo
58th Assembly District



David J. Tangipa
8th Assembly District



Anna Caballero
14th Senate District



Tony Strickland
36th Senate District



Henry Stern
27th Senate District



Patrick Ahrens
26th Assembly District