



Scott Mathias  
Director  
Air Quality Policy Division  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20460

RE: Public Comments on Exceptional Events Documents and Tools  
Docket Number EPA-HQ-OAR-2023-0586

Dear Director Mathias,

On behalf the Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC), I would like to thank the EPA for taking steps to make the Exceptional Events Rule more accessible for states in furtherance of their use of prescribed fire. RVCC is a group of rural community advocates, regional and national conservation organizations, business owners, federal and state land managers, and foundations focused on land stewardship and aligned economic development across the West.

Maintaining, and ideally expanding, the use of prescribed fire is vital to the wellbeing of our forests and nearby communities. When administered effectively, the Exceptional Events Rule is key to preserving the ability to employ prescribed fire while simultaneously regulating particulate matter to ensure healthy air quality. Just as important as preserving the right and ability to employ prescribed fire is ensuring that state, local, and tribal air quality agencies are able to feasibly access the Exceptional Events Rule.

We greatly appreciate the EPA providing the Wildland Fire Tiering Document and data visualization tools. As successfully accessing the Exceptional Events Rule can be extremely difficult, particularly for communities with low administrative capacity, we encourage the EPA to continue to distribute similar resources in the future. Further, we urge the EPA to provide technical assistance to address capacity issues in determining tiering thresholds. Any actions that would alleviate the administrative burdens of navigating this often-complicated process would be greatly appreciated. As a voice for local landowners and rural communities, RVCC asks that EPA ensure that these constituencies are kept in mind when developing future resources.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can provide any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Laurel Harkness". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'L'.

Laurel Harkness, Coalition Director  
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