



For Immediate Release
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Runner Seeks Relief for Fire Victims Despite Cal Fire Response

SACRAMENTO – George Runner today announced he will continue to seek relief from California’s “Fire Prevention Fee” for residents who find themselves the victim of a natural disaster.

In his [response](#) to Runner’s [letter](#) Cal Fire Director Ken Pimlott stated, “the Fire Prevention Fee statute, as written, provides no authority for Cal Fire to waive fees due to the loss of structures from natural disasters of any kind, nor authority to provide refunds for victims under these circumstances.”

“I am disappointed Cal Fire declined my request to halt billing to fire victims. At a time like this, taxes are the last thing they should be worrying about,” said Runner. “That’s why I’m asking local legislators to introduce urgency legislation to waive fees and provide refunds for fire victims who have lost their homes.”

Runner also sent a letter informing his constituents of his plan and of the limited relief options currently available.

Victims of natural disasters may request additional time to pay their bills. They may also request relief of penalties and interest under certain circumstances. These options are available online at boe.ca.gov/electsv/erelief or by calling 1-800-400-7115.

Runner noted that these individuals may also wish to file an appeal within 30 days of the bill date to protect their standing for a possible refund in the event the courts rule this fee unconstitutional.

Elected in November 2010, George Runner represents more than nine million Californians as a member of the State Board of Equalization. Runner keeps taxpayers informed of the latest fire tax news and information at calfirefee.com.

FULL TEXT OF RUNNER LETTER

Dear Taxpayer:

According to the information we've received, I understand your home may have been damaged or destroyed by the Clover Fire.

As your taxpayer advocate and elected member of the Board of Equalization, I'm deeply sorry for your loss. I understand that you and your loved ones face many challenges as you seek to rebuild your lives.

At a time like this, taxes are among the least of your concerns. That's why I sent a letter to Cal Fire seeking permission to cancel the "Fire Prevention Fee" bills scheduled to mail to fire victims in Shasta County on October 16.

Unfortunately, Cal Fire declined my request, informing me that the "Fire Prevention Fee statute, as written, provides no authority for Cal Fire to waive fees due to loss of structures from natural disasters of any kind, nor authority to provide refunds for victims under these circumstances."

A limited number of relief options are still available. You may request an extension to pay your bill. You may also request relief of penalties and interest under certain circumstances. These options are available online at boe.ca.gov/electsrv/erelief or by calling 1-800-400-7115.

You may also wish to file an appeal within 30 days of your bill date to protect your standing for a possible refund in the event the courts rule this fee unconstitutional. For your convenience, I've enclosed a copy of the appeal petition.

I've also asked your local legislators to introduce urgency legislation to waive the fees and provide refunds for fire victims and others who may have lost their homes due to natural disaster.

Since the fee is based upon "habitable structures" it is only fair to exempt those whose homes have been destroyed.

I look forward to working with your legislators to provide relief to all Californians who suffer the loss of homes and property due to disasters. I'll be providing updates on our efforts at www.calfirefee.com.

Again, I deeply regret your loss. If I can be of assistance in any way as you seek to rebuild, please do not hesitate to contact my office at 916-445-2181.

Sincerely,
GEORGE RUNNER
Second District

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