



## For Immediate Release

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### **CAL FIRE AWARDS GRANT TO SIERRA PACIFIC INDUSTRIES TO GROW 25 MILLION SEEDLINGS**

*State-of-the-art seedling nursery to facilitate forest restoration, research, and conservation projects for communities to increase forest resilience after wildfire, disease, or pest outbreaks*

(Sacramento) The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) awarded Sierra Pacific Industries (SPI) a \$3 million grant to advance production of tree seedlings in California. This grant leverages SPI's investment in the first phase of a more than \$10 million state-of-the-art nursery to be built and operated by SPI in Siskiyou County's Gazelle, CA. The nursery will specialize in production of native conifer seedlings for forest restoration, research, and conservation projects.

"CAL FIRE is very pleased to be partnering with Sierra Pacific Industries to expand tree nursery production in California, especially now when reforestation is so critical for the future of our conifer forests," said Stewart McMorrow, Staff Chief of Wildfire Resilience at CAL FIRE. "This nursery will add much needed capacity and jobs and will serve to further our combined efforts to restore forest cover on private and public lands. We are thankful that Sierra Pacific Industries can make this a reality. "

Wildfires have burned millions of forested acres in California in recent years. Current nursery capacity in the Western U.S is not sufficient to fill the need for seedlings to reforest these damaged landscapes. More than a third of the forests that have burned recently have seen high-severity fire, which kills at least 75 percent of vegetation, leaving altered landscapes of dead trees behind. Without direct intervention, the most severely burned forests are likely to be replaced by brush. This funding will enable SPI to start project construction sooner than planned, helping to increase capacity to rapidly respond to reforestation needs and ensuring California-grown seedlings are available for post-fire recovery efforts.

"The demands to revive forestlands in the state far outweigh the supply of materials that our industry is able to currently accommodate," said Jimi Scheid, CAL FIRE Reforestation Services Manager. "Being able to amplify these outputs in the form of ready-to-plant, climatically suitable seedlings, will help us mitigate the growing threats to our forests and the benefits they provide."

This new nursery will help address the need for additional seedling production in a short amount of time. Production will ramp up over the first several years with 6 million seedlings projected to be sown in 2024, followed by another 12 million seedlings the following year. The nursery, expected to be fully operational by 2026, will be capable of producing 25 million seedlings annually. Additionally, it will employ about 10 full-time people and as many as 110 seasonal workers, which is a benefit to the rural community of Gazelle.

“Healthy, growing forests provide clean water and air, important wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and jobs for rural economies,” said Jessica Hinojosa, SPI Tree Improvement Manager. “SPI is making this investment to help meet our State’s growing needs for high-quality, native conifer seedlings. We appreciate CAL FIRE’s support for this immense endeavor. We look forward partnering with public and private organizations across the State that are working to recover and restore California’s forests.”

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*[The Department of Forestry and Fire Protection](#) (CAL FIRE) serves and safeguards the people and protects the property and resources of California. The men and women of CAL FIRE are dedicated to the fire protection and stewardship of over 31 million acres of California's privately owned wildlands. CAL FIRE's mission emphasizes the management and protection of California's natural resources; a goal that is accomplished through ongoing assessment and study of the State's natural resources.*

*[Sierra Pacific Industries](#) is a third-generation, family-owned forest products company based in Anderson, California. SPI owns and sustainably manages more than 2.4 million acres of timberland in California, Oregon and Washington and is one of the largest U.S. lumber manufacturers. The company also produces millwork, windows, and renewable energy. In California, SPI has over 3400 crew members supporting the company’s operations that include 1.9 million acres of timberlands, 10 sawmills, three millwork and remanufacturing plants, two bark plants, five biomass cogeneration energy plants, and windows manufacturing plants.*