

# SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS TIMES

Letter to the editor:

## North Bay not facing amphibious assault

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Nov 22, 2017

Our hearts go out to those in Santa Rosa and elsewhere who lost homes in the recent Northern California wildfires. We sincerely hope these folks can quickly rebuild their homes. But to clarify: The highly imperiled California tiger salamander will not be a major obstacle to rebuilding (“Why one of the biggest barriers to rebuilding Santa Rosa may be an endangered salamander,” Business Times Nov. 7 online, Nov. 10 print).

California tiger salamanders in Sonoma County have lost more than 80 percent of their historic habitat to urbanization and face continued threats. Partly because of efforts of the organization I work for, the salamander was protected under the Endangered Species Act in 2003.

But these protections will have little if any impact on rebuilding. Here’s why: areas impacted by the fires have almost no overlap with protected critical habitat for the salamander.

Brand-new housing developments in California tiger salamander habitat may be subject to additional planning and mitigation, but that is entirely separate from rebuilding homes. Nothing about the salamander’s endangered status in Sonoma County will prevent the rebuilding of fire-destroyed homes.

Protections for the California tiger salamander help preserve remaining wetland areas that not only help the salamanders, but also enrich people’s lives by providing habitat for many other animals. This is precisely why the Endangered Species Act works so well – it helps us identify and protect parts of the natural world we all love, while not unduly burdening our daily lives.