

October 23, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
Committee on Environment  
& Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment &  
& Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

As you know, our nation is experiencing another catastrophic wildfire season. Over 8.8 million acres have already burned this year and we may break the record that was set just two years ago. Some of the worst devastation has occurred on overstocked, unhealthy federal forests, where wildfires have affected millions of Americans living in nearby communities and polluted the air with toxic smoke. We need Congress to reform the federal forest management policies that are a key cause of the worsening wildfire seasons and deteriorating forest health, as well as addressing the broken and unsustainable fire funding model.

At a recent hearing before your Committee, you heard from a wide array of industry, conservation, and state government interests in support of a comprehensive approach to these significant – but solvable – problems.

We commend you for taking some of the best ideas from the bills discussed at your September 27<sup>th</sup> hearing and incorporating them into the draft bill under consideration at this weeks' hearing. These provisions include meaningful policy and legal reforms to increase federal forest management and thinning activities.

The legislation will prevent unnecessary litigation against needed forest management projects, expediting NEPA analysis while preserving public input and involvement, and provide an array of new tools to expedite projects designed to meet a variety of forest management objectives. Reducing fuels, particularly in our Western forests, and creating a variety of habitat ages and types, are critical to the long term health of our public forests and rangelands.

Our organizations applaud your efforts to address both crises facing our National Forests and public lands. This legislation represents a significant step towards addressing the management questions. We urge you to rapidly conclude bipartisan negotiations so that this Congress can enact both fire funding and forest management reform legislation this year.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Forest Resource Council  
American Loggers Council  
Allegheny Hardwood Utilization Group  
Associated California Loggers  
Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho  
Associated Oregon Loggers  
Association of O&C Counties  
Black Hills Forest Resource Association  
Black Hills Regional Multiple Use Coalition  
California Forestry Association

Colorado Timber Industry Association  
Federal Forest Resource Coalition  
Forest Resources Association  
Great Lakes Timber Professionals Association  
Hardwood Federation  
Healthy Forests, Healthy Communities  
Idaho Forest Group  
Intermountain Forest Association  
Michigan Forest Products Council  
Minnesota Forest Industries  
Minnesota Timber Producers Association

Missouri Forest Products Association  
Montana Logging Association  
Montana Wood Products Association  
National Alliance of Forest Owners  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
New Mexico Forest Industry Association  
Pennsylvania Forest Products Association  
Professional Logging Contractors of Maine  
Public Lands Council

Sierra Cascade Logging Conference  
Sierra Pacific Industries  
Southern Oregon Timber Industries Association  
Treated Wood Council  
Washington Forest Protection Association  
Washington Hardwoods Commission  
West Virginia Loggers Council