

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2020

Vicki Christiansen
Chief, United States Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20227

Dear Chief Christiansen,

We are writing to express our concern over the use of cameras to enforce U.S. Forest Service regulations in our national forests.

This concern arises out of incidents in Boundary County, Idaho, where cameras have been used to penalize individuals who were driving on unauthorized routes. While we recognize that cameras can be a useful tool in gathering evidence of infractions, we urge the Forest Service to develop policies that ensure these cameras are used fairly and with proper protections for individual privacy.

Although it is indeed the users' ultimate responsibility to learn whether a road is authorized for vehicle travel, there are many instances where it is difficult for potential road users to know this. From changing road designations to outdated maps, often there is confusion about the status of Forest Service roads. In addition, national forest visitors report that many times these unauthorized roads are not marked.

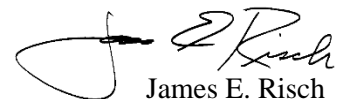
We understand there are problems caused by individuals using unauthorized roads. However, in many instances it appears that these individuals may not know they are breaking Forest Service regulations. Individuals who are unaware that they were committing an infraction are understandably upset when they receive a citation with a photograph of their vehicle. While national forests are public spaces, most people do not expect to have federal cameras monitoring their activity while visiting them.

We encourage the Forest Service to review how its personnel use cameras to enforce the law. Should the Forest Service continue to use cameras to police activities on unauthorized roads, we would suggest personnel issue warnings.

Thank you for your consideration.



Mike Crapo
United States Senate



James E. Risch
United States Senate



Russ Fulcher
House of Representatives