

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

September 22, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
317 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
322 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-232, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives  
H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi, and Leader McCarthy,

This wildfire season is far from over and already wildland fires have ravaged over six million acres of land across the West costing lives and property, compromising our air and water quality, decimating wildlife habitat, and destroying otherwise productive timberland. Hundreds of thousands of families have been forced to flee their homes, proliferating the impacts of the current health and economic crisis we face.

While Congress has enacted meaningful forestry provisions in recent years, it is clear we must do more or our communities will continue pay the price. Wildfires have no physical boundaries, and neither should they have political ones. When a fire is ignited, federal, state, and local entities come together as one, regardless of political affiliation, to coordinate emergency response and protect communities. That same spirit of collaboration is possible in Congress as we seek sound solutions to improve our forests. We urge you to build on the bipartisan reforms enacted in 2014 and 2018 and take action to protect at-risk communities by accelerating bold, broad, bipartisan forest management reform before the end of the year.

Fuel, weather, and topography comprise the three legs of the Wildland Fire Behavior Triangle. Of those components, fuel is the only factor we have the ability to manage. Yet year after year fuels accumulate in our forests as management projects go neglected, delayed or obstructed. There is a clear correlation between the decline in timber harvests experienced on our National Forests and the increase in intensity and size of wildfires over the past three decades—both of which have had lasting impacts on the economic vitality of Western, rural communities. While our forests burn, our economic, recreational, and aesthetic capital burns with it.

While we recognize the ecological role wildfires can play in ecosystems, the severity and intensity of wildfires supersede that which should be occurring. Bureaucratic processes, burdensome regulations, external pressure, and judicial activism hamstring our federal agencies from completing work on the ground in a timely manner. We must arm our federal land agencies with the tools they require to sustain the health and productivity of our nation's forests. Doing so is compatible with efforts to reduce emissions, as well-managed forests and the buildings constructed by the sustainable wood products that come from them have the potential to sequester carbon.

It is clear that we are past the point of merely discussing forest policies—we need bold forest management reform now. Over the course of the last two years, Western Caucus Members have introduced several legislative proposals that would improve the health and resiliency of our forests and promote active management surrounding at-risk communities. The bicameral and bipartisan Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act is one such proposal that contains comprehensive forestry reforms and is supported by a strong coalition of stakeholders. We believe this offers the best starting point for broad forest management reform.

Wildfires don't heed political lines, they impact all Americans the same. During these hyper-partisan times, there aren't many issues that unite both Republicans and Democrats, but managing our forests to protect our communities can be one of them. Thank you for considering this request, and we look forward to partnering with you to enact forest management reform this year.

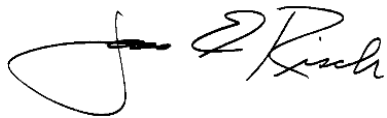
Sincerely,



Steve Daines  
U.S. Senator



Doug LaMalfa  
Member of Congress



James E. Risch  
U.S. Senator



Kevin Cramer  
U.S. Senator



Mike Crapo  
U.S. Senator



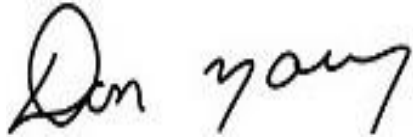
Martha McSally  
U.S. Senator



John Barrasso, M.D.  
U.S. Senator



Paul Gosar, D.D.S  
Member of Congress



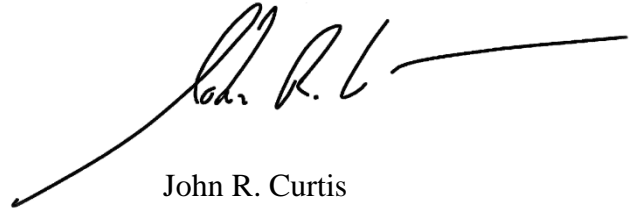
Don Young  
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rogers  
Member of Congress



John R. Curtis  
Member of Congress



Louie Gohmert  
Member of Congress



Glenn "GT" Thompson  
Member of Congress



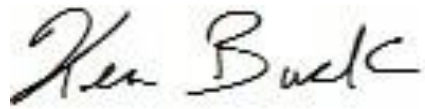
Russ Fulcher  
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert  
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Greg Gianforte  
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Ken Buck  
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Debbie Lesko  
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Pete Stauber  
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Mike Simpson  
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Tom McClintock  
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Mark E. Amodei  
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Jeff Duncan  
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Rick Crawford  
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Dusty Johnson  
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