

# Congress of the United States

## House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0301

March 30, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment  
and Related Agencies  
2007 Rayburn House Office Building  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
1016 Longworth HOB  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

As you begin crafting the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we request that you include the administration's proposed package of active management legislative reforms.

According to the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior, their proposed legislative package "would provide categorical exclusions on national forest lands and on Interior lands for active forest management, including the ability to harvest dead, dying, or damaged trees as well as proactive fuels management, including the use of fuel breaks."

2017 was one of the worst wildfire seasons in history with 71,499 fires burning approximately 10 million acres. The Forest Service spent more than \$2.5 billion on suppression costs last fiscal year alone - a new record. 2018 was another terrible fire season with 58,083 wildfires burning approximately 8.8 million acres. The Mendocino Complex Fire in Northern California was the largest fire in state history with 459,123 acres burned. The Carr Fire in Northern California claimed eight lives and destroyed more than 1,600 structures. These two fires destroyed 8,900 homes and 329 businesses costing more than \$840 million in insured losses. The Camp Fire was the costliest disaster in the world last year, costing more than \$12.5 billion in insured losses, claiming 88 lives and destroying nearly 19,000 structures, roughly 14,000 of which were homes.

Mismanagement by federal agencies has left our forests vulnerable to insects and disease and ripe for catastrophic wildfires. The system is broken. We need additional forest management authorities and we need them now.

Catastrophic fires also cause significant damage to the environment. Robust data from NASA shows that one catastrophic wildfire can emit more carbon emissions in a few days than total vehicle emissions in an entire state over the course of a year. As a result of wildfires in 2017, Seeley Lake, Montana set a record for the worst air quality ever recorded there - 18 times greater than EPA's safe particle limit. This is a treatable problem, and one which we understand the causes of very well.

Accordingly, we ask that the FY 2020 base bill include the Forest Service and Interior packages of legislative reforms that will proactively reduce the risks associated with catastrophic wildfire.

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.  
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop  
Member of Congress



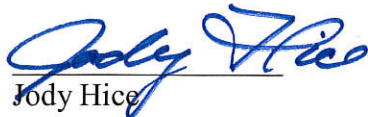
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Member of Congress



Greg Gianforte  
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Jody Hice  
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Duncan Hunter  
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Doug LaMalfa  
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