



Treat the Disease Support Forest Management in a Wildfire Funding Fix

Our national forests have been in a continuous state of declining health for at least two decades. Not only are more wildfires burning federal lands, but they burn hotter, faster, and destroy more acres. This year alone, over 57,000 wildfires burned over 5.1 million acres of land. These fires choked our air with smoke, and polluted our waterways with ash and debris.

In years past, federal land management agencies have been forced to borrow from land management and other important activities to fight wildfires. Agencies are then left with fewer resources to conduct thinning, timber harvests, and controlled burns, which can reduce the severity of wildfires. This fire-borrowing cycle negatively impacts fiscal and forest health.

However, solving the fire-borrowing problem alone is the equivalent of treating symptoms but not the underlying disease. Even if Congress fixes fire-borrowing, land management agencies are subject to constant red tape and legal threats that hinder their ability to carry out the needed operations to protect and improve federal landscapes.

In July 2015, the House acted on this principle in a bipartisan manner, when it passed HR 2647, the Resilient Federal Forests Act. This legislation would end fire-borrowing in a fiscally responsible manner, and also make necessary changes to forest management practices by building on the 2014 Farm Bill's categorical exclusions, expediting the removal of dead trees after a wildfire, and timber harvesting in areas impacted by pine beetle infestation. Better management of our forests will help to reduce the severity of wildfires, improve environmental quality, and save taxpayers money in the long run. **HR 2647 provides a bipartisan path forward, and should be a framework for any potential forest management and fire-borrowing fix legislation.**

We urge members of Congress to fix both of these problems simultaneously. It is the best way to ensure that our forests stay healthy and resilient, while also protecting agency budgets.