



Contact Information:

Matt Weiner, CEO of Megafire Action

matt@megafire.org

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HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE PASSES FIXING OUR FORESTS ACT

Today, Congress took a significant step toward addressing the megafire crisis as the House Committee on Natural Resources passed bipartisan H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act (FOFA), on a voice vote. Megafire Action, a non-profit dedicated to enacting policy solutions to end the megafire crisis, supports this bipartisan bill's efforts to improve critical fuels treatments and protect communities. The bill's potential to responsibly address regulatory burdens and leverage technology to better target and prioritize landscapes is a crucial aspect of its impact on the megafire crisis.

"As the megafire crisis grows larger and more severe with each fire season, we need policy solutions that reflect the urgency and scale of the problem. We are encouraged that the Committee on Natural Resources reported the bill by voice vote and look forward to continuing to work with Chairman Westerman and Representative Peters to improve the Fixing Our Forests Act and address some of the legitimate issues raised during today's markup." - **Matt Weiner, CEO of Megafire Action**

The bill contains several crucial provisions that are essential in our fight against the megafire crisis. It capitalizes on the burgeoning opportunity to use new technology, modeling techniques, predictive analytics, and artificial intelligence to help us meet our resilience goals faster, cheaper, and better. Megafire Action is particularly supportive of the legislation's inclusion of a proposed Fireshed Center, a joint effort between the Forest Service and the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), to help modernize decision making and break down barriers to collaborative planning.

The bill:

- Recognizes the role that natural fire and cultural burning play in healthy ecosystems and promotes and prioritizes fuels management techniques such as prescribed fire and selective forest thinning
- Places important guardrails on necessary streamlining, including acreage limitations for categorical exclusions at 10,000 acres – similar to that requested by state governments, including in California
- Includes a pilot testbed program for innovative wildfire mitigation
- Strengthens Good Neighbor Authority
- Clarifies the need for Tribal partnerships and sovereignty
- Invests in improved biochar utilization

Megafire Action applauds the Committee for its bipartisan adoption of Rep. Hoyle's (acting on behalf of Rep. Neguse) amendment to reauthorize and enhance the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program and the Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership program.