

House Engrossed

urging Congress; national forest health

State of Arizona
House of Representatives
Fifty-sixth Legislature
First Regular Session
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HOUSE CONCURRENT MEMORIAL 2004

A CONCURRENT MEMORIAL

URGING THE UNITED STATES CONGRESS TO ENACT SOUND FOREST MANAGEMENT
POLICIES IN NATIONAL FOREST SERVICE LANDS.

(TEXT OF BILL BEGINS ON NEXT PAGE)

1 To the Congress of the United States of America:

2 Your memorialist respectfully represents:

3 Whereas, America's national forest system (NFS) comprises more than
4 750 million acres—covering approximately one-third of our nation's land
5 mass—and provides the United States with a wealth of beauty and economic
6 prosperity; and

7 Whereas, America's forest lands are dying at an unprecedented rate
8 due to catastrophic wildfires and devastating insect and disease epidemics
9 that have resulted from years of mismanagement and unsound policies; and

10 Whereas, more than 100 years ago, the federal government recognized
11 the importance of a responsible forest management policy that combined
12 protection of forest resources with commercial outputs. For most of the
13 twentieth century the federal government largely adhered to this prudent,
14 common-sense policy, which provided for multiple uses of forests lands in
15 conjunction with sustained economic yield; and

16 Whereas, over the past 25 years, however, our NFS has experienced a
17 crisis as changes to forest management policies have resulted in
18 uncoordinated, conflicting and overbearing state and federal
19 regulations. These inconsistent approaches have led to a gridlock of
20 confusion and litigation, with numerous lawsuits being filed to exclude
21 any commercial activity; and

22 Whereas, the newer NFS policies have become skewed toward preserving
23 forests at all costs instead of managing them, leading to choked, overly
24 dense forests that have suffered from the effects of increasingly large
25 and intense wildfires over the past 50 years, particularly in the western
26 United States. These severe wildfires result in increased erosion,
27 increased greenhouse gas emissions, higher levels of air pollution from
28 smoke, loss of fish and wildlife and negative impacts to local
29 economies; and

30 Whereas, a majority of the United States Forest Service budget is
31 now spent on firefighting costs; and

32 Whereas, our nation's once-vibrant timber industry has slowed
33 drastically as hundreds of sawmills have closed and thousands of forest
34 industry jobs have been lost. The resulting 70% reduction in NFS timber
35 outputs has resulted in the United States becoming the world's second
36 largest importer of softwood lumber products, with only China importing
37 more; and

38 Whereas, the combined lack of active forest management and timber
39 harvesting has not only made our forests much more vulnerable to the
40 damaging effects of wildfire, but has resulted in rural economic hardship,
41 steady forest decline and epidemic insect and disease outbreaks; and

42 Whereas, sound scientific solutions, both short-term and long-term,
43 are needed to end forest gridlock and improve the health of both our
44 forests and our nation's economy. Inconsistent and overreaching forest

1 management policies must be replaced by a common-sense policy to make
2 America's forests thrive again.

3 Wherefore your memorialist, the House of Representatives of the State of
4 Arizona, the Senate concurring, prays:

5 1. That the United States Congress enact meaningful legislation
6 that will support reasonable and prudent multiple-use forest management
7 policies to improve our nation's forest health.

8 2. That the Secretary of State of the State of Arizona transmit
9 copies of this Memorial to the President of the United States, the
10 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the United States
11 House of Representatives and each Member of Congress from the State of
12 Arizona.