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Witnesses At the Hastings' Cabin Fee Act Hearing Highlight Need to Pass Legislation to Establish Fair, Sustainable Fee System

WASHINGTON D.C. – Today, the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Forests, Parks and Public Lands held a legislative hearing on the bipartisan Cabin Fee Act of 2010 ([H.R. 4888](#)). The Subcommittee heard from multiple cabin owner witnesses who expressed real need for the legislation, which will correct volatile and skyrocketing cabin fees by [establishing](#) a fair, sustainable fee system.

"Many of the private cabins on Forest Service land are simple, rustic structures hand-built by the grandparents of the current owners early in the last century and passed down from generation to generation...The purpose of this bill is to keep the fees affordable for people such as teachers, factory workers and retirees, not just millionaires – which is just what will happen if we don't address the problem," **said Ranking Member Hastings.**

What They Are Saying about the Cabin Fee Act of 2010:

"...We acknowledge that there are advantages to this bill from an administrative perspective. It would reduce the agency's appraisal costs and it would provide certainty for cabin owners in terms of anticipated fees." – **Joel Holtrop, Deputy Chief National Forest System, U.S. Forest Service**

"Current cabin owners can't afford these unreasonable fees... The Cabin Fee Act of 2010 will promote continued collaboration and provide for fair fees while assuring that average Americans and their families, the Federal and local governments, and the American public will continue to benefit from this unique and valuable program. Please support this bill and help preserve these treasured and historic assets for generations to come." – **Geoffrey Anderson, President, National Forest Homeowners, Lincoln, California**

"The Cabin Fee Act of 2010 provides a permit fee structure that is affordable and predictable for the cabin owner, while ensuring a fair return to the U.S. Government...Under the CFA fee structure, we expect all 14,000 current permits to remain active, keeping the Forest Service Recreation Residence Program within reach of the typical American family...The simple and straight forward fee structure provides future predictability and affordability for the Cabin Program long-term plus easy and consistent administrative procedures for both the Forest Service and permit holders to follow." – **Peter D. Bailey, National Forest Homeowners, Director, Tacoma, Washington**

"Fees have progressively increased and I know many cabin owners who are of modest means

*who will have to leave their cabins if this trend continues. We do not want to be driven out of the forest because of the inability to pay escalating fees. Fees that drive out the modest American will create a change in National Forest use. The US Forest Service will have created a system that is affordable only to the very wealthy. The sense of community and partnerships will end.” – **Maureen E. Barile, Fresno, California***

*“I am 86, a retired WW II and Korean War veteran and my wife and I live on Social Security and a pension. We have always met our obligations to pay the yearly fee for the use permit even when the fee reached \$3000, a struggle for us. We have been informed that our new fee will be \$8850 a year when the current moratorium expires. This is beyond our means; this fee is so high that we cannot even split it between families.” – **Francis True, Sawtooth National Forest***

*“I am 90 years old and my husband is 93. I have used the cabin since its construction [1923] and we consider the log cabin our family treasure... My husband and I are pensioners and we have been given notice that the yearly fees for the “Dresser” cabin will be \$5000!...at their current level, particularly if the fees continue to rise as they have, our family will be unable to afford the fees and taxes associated with the cabin. In such a case, the future for our cabin is bleak.” – **Aileen Davis, Oakhurst, California***

*“I am a divorcee, living on social security, limited investments and income from a part time job at Barnes and Noble. I was working 20 hours a week but I have just been reduced to 5 hours a week due to hard economic times. We struggled to pay the yearly use fees when they were approximately \$3000 per year. They now are \$7000 a year. We cannot afford such high fees and will be forced to abandon the cabin.” – **Diane Dreher, Eau Claire, Wisconsin***

*“If I have to let my cabin go it will not only be a loss to me but to the many friends and groups who use it as well. The cabin has a special attachment for me. I live on a pension and pay the current fee, personal and property taxes myself. We hear that the permit fees will soon be approximately \$4000 a year which will be about 10% of my income. I will be unable to afford such fees and will have to let the cabin go.” – **Jo Musser-Kraus, Tucson, Arizona***

*“We are not a wealthy family...We are your average middle class family and this cabin means everything to us. Our “wealth” is found in memories and our family life at the cabin is an integral part of that...We hear from fellow cabin owners and the Forest Service that yearly cabin permit fees under an appraisal system will likely rise by thousands of dollars. This will put the fee beyond our means. We urge Congress to change the permit fee system to assure a more affordable one for families such as ours.” – **Cindy Sims Langley, Clovis, California***

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