



June 15, 2009

Bark Beetle Infestation Creates Massive Forest Fire Threat in the West

Putting Homes, Businesses and Power Lines in Jeopardy

On Tuesday, June 16, 2009, the House Natural Resources Subcommittees on Water and Power and National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands will hold a hearing on *The Mountain Pine Beetle: Strategies for Saving the West*.

As Mountain Pine Beetles continue to increase the threat of forest fires throughout the West, Republicans believe Congress has a responsibility to take substantive action to address this epidemic by:

- Ensuring our federal land managers have all the means to effectively manage our forests.
- Publicly denouncing excessive litigation against the U.S. Forest Service.
- Ending restrictions on harvesting biomass on Federal lands created by the Democrats' 2007 energy bill.
- Ensuring that stimulus spending actually furthers forest management and creates new jobs.

During the hearing, witnesses from diverse backgrounds will discuss the need to remove the dead and dying trees, better manage our forest resources and stop the "paralysis by analysis" approach currently plaguing our forests.

BACKGROUND

As the following map illustrates, Mountain Pine Beetles have spread throughout the West and reached epidemic levels in America's forests. These beetles specifically infect and kill trees – leaving behind large areas of dead trees and increasing the risk of forest fires around homes, businesses and power lines. For example, the picture below taken on June 11, 2009 shows Wyoming homes surrounded by dead trees caused by Mountain Pine Beetles. Overgrowth in our forests and excessive lawsuits by environmental groups also contribute to the threat. Until our forests are managed correctly, the infestation will continue to put Western communities, water supplies and electricity lines at risk.



#

House Natural Resources Committee Republican Press Office
Contact: [Emily Lawrimore](#) or [Jill Strait](#)
202-226-2311