

U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE REPUBLICANS

CONGRESSMAN DOC HASTINGS, RANKING MEMBER

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Republicans Call for Decisive Action to Address the Mountain Pine Beetle Epidemic

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, Republicans at the House Natural Resources Subcommittee hearing on the Mountain Pine Beetle called for Congress to take immediate action to address the beetle epidemic that has left much of our Western forests dead and vulnerable to devastating forest fires.

“We have millions of acres of dead and dying timber in the West primarily because it wasn’t harvested and responsibly managed. Now, we have communities on the verge of catastrophic destruction due to nearby excessive fuel load. Today’s hearing was the first step towards resolving this dangerous situation. I hope this hearing is followed by swift and decisive action from Democrat leaders, especially when an intense fire season is predicted.” - **Rep. Doc Hastings (WA-04), House Natural Resources Committee Ranking Member and Co-Chair of the Rural America Solutions Group**

“We waste valuable taxpayer dollars fighting wildfires when we could have prevented them in the first place. In fact, over half of our Forest service budget goes to fighting wildfires and that will only get worse if we don’t address the root of the problem – overcrowded forests and diseased and dying trees.” - **Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers (WA-05), Water and Power Subcommittee Ranking Member**

“A bipartisan consensus was met today at the hearing affirming biomass as a renewable energy source. This definition was unfortunately left out of the Waxman-Markey bill during mark-up. Bark beetle damage in our forests has created a market for fallen timber. Congress must recognize the importance biomass plays in our fight against the bark beetle and to our energy security.” - **Rep. Jason Chaffetz (UT-03)**

“Decisions about fuel reduction, beetle prevention and mitigation, prompt harvesting of dead and dying trees, and the overall health of our forests have real, tangible effects on the livelihood of people in Wyoming. We live near or even in these forests, we base entire industries off of them, we recreate and enjoy them, and we count on these forests to attract thousands of tourists every year. The beetle kill epidemic occurring in Wyoming is devastating to our forest economies. We are also one unlucky lightning strike away from a serious threat to human health and safety. It is time we learn what tools our land managers need to address this epidemic and ensure they have those tools at their disposal.” - **Rep. Cynthia Lummis (WY- at large)**

"The view and perspective for what is happening and how it should be fixed looks very different to an out-of-state bureaucrat flying overhead at 30,000 feet. When it comes to forest management, one size fits all solutions can often times cause more problems than they solve. We've got boots on the ground, and in the forests of Montana ready to do what is necessary to restore our forests to a healthy, green state." - **Rep. Denny Rehberg (MT - at large)**

"Bark Beetles have killed almost 2 million acres of trees in Colorado. This has created an atmosphere ripe for wildfire which threatens our water, our economy and our way of life in the West. Congress and stakeholders must take decisive action to address this problem." - **Rep. Mike Coffman (CO-06)**

Specific solutions highlighted today by Republicans include:

- 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.

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