

DOC HASTINGS, WA  
CHAIRMAN  
DON YOUNG, AK  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN  
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX  
ROB BISHOP, UT  
DOUG LAMBORN, CO  
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA  
PAUL C. BROUN, GA  
JOHN FLEMING, LA  
MIKE COFFMAN, CO  
TOM McCLINTOCK, CA  
GLENN THOMPSON, PA  
JEFF DENHAM, CA  
DAN BENISHK, MI  
DAVID RIVERA, FL  
JEFF DUNCAN, SC  
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO  
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ  
RAÚL R. LABRADOR, ID  
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD  
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL  
BILL FLORES, TX  
ANDY HARRIS, MD  
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA  
JON RUNYAN, NJ  
BILL JOHNSON, OH  
MARK AMODEI, NV

TODD YOUNG  
CHIEF OF STAFF

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

**Opening Statement by  
Chairman Tom McClintock**

**Subcommittee on Water and Power**

**At the Joint Subcommittee Oversight Field Hearing on**

***“Logs in the Road: Eliminating Federal Red Tape and Excessive Litigation to  
Create Healthy Forests, Jobs and Abundant Water and Power Supplies”***

**Monday, May 14, 2012**

**Montrose, Colorado**

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER  
DALE E. KILDEE, MI  
PETER A. DEFazio, OR  
ENI F.H. FALOMAVAEGA, AS  
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ  
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA  
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ  
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, AZ  
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU  
JIM COSTA, CA  
DAN BOREN, OK  
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN, CNMI  
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM  
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM  
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD  
BETTY SUTTON, OH  
NIKI TSONGAS, MA  
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR  
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA  
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI  
PAUL TONKO, NY

JEFFREY DUNCAN  
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

Today’s hearing has a ponderous title but it is a national policy imperative: “Eliminating Federal Red Tape and Excessive Litigation” is indeed the only path to “Create Healthy Forests, Jobs and Abundant Water and Power Supplies.”

I want to thank Congressman Scott Tipton for his leadership on these issues and for pressing to have this field hearing conducted here in Montrose, a community that bears the wounds of the “Greens Gone Wild” policies of recent years.

An old forester in my district summed up the problem we are here to assess when he said, “The excess timber is going to come out of the forest one way or another. Either it will be carried out or it will be burned out. But it will come out.”

A generation ago, we carried it out and the result was a thriving economy and a healthy forest. But then a radical and retrograde ideology was introduced into our public policy transforming sound forest management practices into what can only be described as benign neglect.

The result is now clear and undeniable: economically devastated communities, closed timber mills, unemployed families, overgrown forests, overdrawn watersheds, jeopardized transmission lines, rampant disease and pestilence and increasingly intense and frequent forest fires.

That is the story of Montrose, Colorado and Saratoga, Wyoming, of Quincy and Camino and Sonora (little towns in my district in California’s Sierra-Nevada) – once thriving and prosperous communities that have been devastated by these policies.

When the mills in my district closed in 2009 the owner made it very clear that although the economic downturn was a catalyst, the underlying cause was the fact that 2/3 of the timber they depended upon was held up by environmental litigation.

Despite the recession, they still had enough business to keep the mills open --- and to keep these families employed – if the environmental Left had not cut off the timber, those mills depended upon.

This is not environmentalism. True environmentalists recognize the damage done by overgrowth and overpopulation and recognize the role of sound, sustainable forest management practices in maintaining healthy forests.

No picture I've seen paints a more vivid case for returning to these sound and proven forest management practices than an aerial photo of the Fraser Experimental Forest in Colorado a few years ago that is often called the "Red Hand of Death." The areas of that forest consigned to benign neglect forms a dead-zone that looks like a "Red Hand." Overgrown and unmanaged, bark beetles found it easy pickings. That's what the so-called environmental movement has done to our forests.

It is surrounded by green, thriving, healthy forest in which excess timber was properly harvested and the remaining trees had enough room to grow strong enough to resist the infestation around it.

We're told that there isn't enough money for forest thinning, and yet we used to have no problems keeping our forests thinned and healthy when we sold commercially viable timber. The problem is that if they take place at all, timber harvests are restricted to small diameter trees. Can you imagine a fishery or wildlife policy limited to taking only the small, juvenile of the species?

Meanwhile, we know that of \$53 million of so-called "stimulus funds" allocated to the Forest Service in Colorado, only \$16 million was allocated to address the bark beetle infestation, while the remainder went to such dubious projects as a "bird tour road" and solar panels.

Fortunately, from what I have seen, the American public has awakened to the ramification of these policies and has had a belly-full of them – and it is in the process of replacing the politicians responsible for them. I believe we are on the verge of a new era when proven practices and common sense will replace the ideological extremism that has dominated our forest policy for the past generation.

I am particularly interested today in suggestions of what needs to be done legislatively and administratively to unravel the paralyzing tangle of litigation, over-regulation, and endless deliberation that have misguided our federal agencies so far from their public trust.

I again want to thank Scott Tipton for his indefatigable leadership on this issue, and Rob Bishop, chairman of the sub-committee with direct oversight over our forests for his efforts over many years to combat and correct these policies. I think that because of his steady leadership we are now on the verge of being able to change those policies and produce a new era of healthy and thriving forests as well as prosperous and secure forest communities.