



WASHINGTON COUNTY

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Employer of Choice

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Congressman Doc Hastings
Chairman
Natural Resources Committee
United States House, Washington DC

Congressman Peter Defazio
Ranking Member
Natural Resources Committee
United States House, Washington DC

Dear Congressmen Hastings and Defazio:

The Washington County, Utah Board of County Commissioners would like to take this opportunity to encourage your support of H.R. 1526, also known as the "Restoring Healthy Forests for Healthy Communities Act." This piece of legislation would be very beneficial for our county, our citizens, and our forests.

For many years our national forests were managed profitably by the federal government. Jobs were created, taxes were paid, education, infrastructure, and the whole economy benefited. However, in the intervening years, and as a result of a failed Federal Forest management system, the saw mills of southern Utah and northern Arizona have been dismantled, sawmill equipment was sold for pennies on the dollar, and much of it has been shipped out of the country. The loss of high-paying jobs has had a crippling impact on schools, entire communities have suffered, and our way of life irreparably harmed.

We support H.R. 1526 because sustainable forest management is essential not only for financial and ecological reasons, but because the current management system has demonstrated that it is unsustainable. Whether it is the loss of habitat, catastrophic fires, or bark beetle infestations, our current system is broken and needs fixing. H.R. 1526 addresses all of the issues. We will fully support H.R. 1526 and will encourage our House members to speak in support of and vote for the bill when it comes to the House floor.

Sincerely,

Alan Gardner, Commissioner

James Eardley, Chair

Dennis Drake, Commissioner