



June 27, 2017

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
House Natural Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
House Natural Resources Committee
1329 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

The Public Lands Council (PLC) and the National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) strongly support H.R. 2936, the *Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017*, introduced by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R- Ark.). PLC is the only national organization dedicated solely to representing the roughly 22,000 ranchers who operate on federal lands. NCBA is the beef industry's largest and oldest national marketing and trade association, representing American cattlemen and women who provide much of the nation's supply of food and own or manage a large portion of America's private property.

The Resilient Federal Forests Act will expedite environmental reviews and assessments for the removal of dead trees and set deadlines for reforestation projects to occur. Such changes ensure forests are no longer neglected and establish a healthier management pattern. Further, this legislation discourages frivolous litigation by requiring litigants who oppose a management project to come to the table with an alternative, rather than just tying up agency time and resources in court. The bill provides an incentive for collaborative efforts between local governments, local stakeholders and federal land management agencies. Finally, the legislation prevents "fire borrowing" and stops federal agencies from raiding accounts necessary for proper forest and range management.

The severe mismanagement of federally-owned forests and rangelands, due to outdated environmental laws and regulations along with the abuse of the legal system by radical special interest groups, creates devastating economic hardship and danger for our members and rural communities across the west. The livestock industry and rural economies will spend decades attempting to recover from millions of dollars' worth of infrastructure damage and forage loss that have been the result of catastrophic wildfires in recent years, not to mention the loss of valuable wildlife habitats.

It is scientifically proven that proper timber management and rangeland management through grazing is the key to maintaining healthy forests and preventing catastrophic wildfires. However, according to the BLM, livestock grazing has been reduced on BLM lands by as much as 50 percent since 1971, while the timber industry has been all but destroyed over the last 30 years,

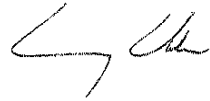
due almost entirely to federal laws and regulations and predatory environmental groups. Restrictions have allowed the accumulation of fuel, increasing risk of wildfires and leading to harm of forest ecosystems and western communities – the watershed, wildlife, air quality, rural communities and the taxpayers are all negatively impacted.

PLC and NCBA believe that H.R. 2936 is a positive step forward to returning management flexibility and fiscal responsibility to the federal land management agencies. PLC and NCBA appreciate the opportunity to provide our input on behalf of our members – the nation's food and fiber producers. H.R. 2936 is proactive, common sense legislation, and we would encourage the committee to pass the bill out of committee without delay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Dave Eliason".

Dave Eliason
President
Public Lands Council

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Craig Uden".

Craig Uden
President
National Cattlemen's Beef Association