

**STATEMENT of  
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CHIEF  
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FOREST SERVICE  
Submitted to  
THE HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS  
on  
THE RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017**

Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present a statement regarding the **Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017**. The U.S. Forest Service is currently reviewing this discussion draft, and the Administration does not have a position on it at this time.

We appreciate the significant work the Subcommittee put into this bill since it was last introduced in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress. We also appreciate your efforts to incorporate Forest Service comments and recommendations and are encouraged by many of the goals outlined within this bill. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your staffs on the details to ensure this legislation results in meaningful improvements to forest management work on the ground.

The Forest Service welcomes legislation that expands the toolset we can use to restore our nation's forests while staying within the boundaries and intent of the National Environmental Policy Act and the Endangered Species Act. Forest restoration projects provide rural jobs, mitigate the severity of wildfires, enhance watershed conditions, and ensure a variety of other economic, social and environmental benefits for the American people. Provisions that expand categorical exclusions, incentivize collaboration, and streamline environmental analysis or consultation with other federal agencies are all important issues in the bill that we are reviewing.

It is notable that the Resilient Federal Forests Act does not contain provisions that would mandate harvest levels, require a new layer of zoning on the National Forests, or elevate one use over another on these multiple-use lands, as we have seen in other recent forestry bills.

While we support efforts to provide new tools to improve forest management and restoration, capacity constraints, including the present approach to budgeting for wildfire, continue to be impediments to increasing the pace and scale of this work. We look forward to continuing to work with you on the wildfire title to find a solution that addresses the disproportionate growth of fire programs as a share of the agency's overall budget.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide this statement. The Forest Service stands ready to continue working with you on this important legislation.