

Committee on Resources

Chairman's Statement

SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTS & FOREST HEALTH STATEMENT OF THE HONORABLE HELEN CHENOWETH

March 5, 1997

The Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health convenes today for a hearing on H.R. 858, the Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery and Economic Stability Act of 1997. The bill was introduced last week by Mr. Herger of California, with his colleagues Mr. Fazio of California, Mr. Smith of Oregon, and Mr. Faleomavaega of American Samoa. I am pleased that at our first hearing the Subcommittee on Forests will consider this bi-partisan legislation that was developed by a diverse group of people and interests.

A portion of the area covered by this bill is in Mr. Fazio's district, and I am pleased that he is joining us today to testify on the legislation. Three members of the Quincy Library Group will also testify. In addition, we will hear from Under Secretary of Agriculture Jim Lyons, and representatives from two environmental groups from outside the Quincy Library Group area.

Mr. Herger's legislation demonstrates that it is possible for people of very diverse interests to agree on objectives for the management of our national forests. They have also agreed on a plan for achieving those objectives. The Quincy Library Group is to be commended for developing solutions for us to consider today, instead of asking Congress to referee over continued conflicts. I hope today the Administration will add its support to the bill, since Secretary Glickman and Under Secretary Lyons have been so supportive of this effort over the past several years.

As our witnesses will explain, the Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery and Economic Stability Act of 1997 is the culmination of more than four years of work by those who have the most at stake in the management of the Plumas, Lassen and Tahoe National Forests -- the people who live and work there. They are the people who care most about sustaining both the health of the national forests and the social and economic health of their community. The legislation aims to implement a locally-designed, consensus-based plan to improve the condition of the national forests, reduce fire danger to the communities, and still provide needed economic benefits.

I commend Mr. Herger and the Quincy Library Group for all the hard work you have done to bring this idea to fruition. I look forward to your testimony, and I welcome my two colleagues, Mr. Herger and Mr. Fazio, to the Subcommittee.

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