



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES

THE RESILIENT FEDERAL FORESTS ACT OF 2017

The “Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2017,” introduced by Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR), is a bipartisan solution to address the growing economic and environmental threats of catastrophic wildfire. The legislation pairs a responsible budget fix with targeted forest management reforms to dramatically improve the health and resiliency of our nation’s forests and rangelands. The bill provides federal land management agencies immediate tools to increase the pace, scale and cost efficiency of forest management projects without sacrificing environmental protections.

Permanently Solves the Wildfire “Borrowing” Problem

Provides a fiscally responsible solution to end fire borrowing without authorizing new mandatory spending. Allows FEMA to transfer limited funds to the USFS or BLM when the rest of their wildfire suppression funding has been exhausted.

Prevents Wildfires and Returns Resiliency to Federal Forests

Utilizes tools that the USFS and BLM can implement immediately to mitigate insect and disease infestation, prevent damage to municipal watersheds and critical infrastructure, quickly harvest wildfire-killed trees to pay for reforestation and improve the health of forests and grasslands to reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire.

Encourages Quick Reforestation and Speeds Habitat Improvement

Streamlines environmental reviews of projects for the removal of dead trees to pay for reforestation after large wildfires. Requires an Environmental Assessment for a reforestation project be completed within two months and the area impacted be reforested within five years. Encourages and speeds wildlife habitat improvement for wild turkey, ruffed grouse, elk, deer and other “early seral” forest-dependent species.

Incentivizes and Rewards Collaboration

Supports collaborative efforts that bring together local governments, land managers and diverse groups of local stakeholders to work together and develop forest management projects. Allows expedited environmental review for collaborative projects up to 30,000 acres in size.

Addresses Obstructionist Litigation

Promotes the quick resolution of litigation against forest management projects. Creates a new arbitration pilot program that would require litigants opposing a forest management activity to come to the table with an alternative proposal rather than just saying “no”.

Maximizes Existing Funding Sources

Allows states to fund forest management activities on national forests through a “State-Supported Forest Management Fund.” (Montana, New Mexico and Oregon have made efforts to support national forest projects to prevent wildfire).

Bolsters Tribal Participation in Forest Health Projects

Expands authorities for tribes to manage adjacent national forests to reduce the risk of wildfire, insects & disease.

Supports Local Governments and Modernizes the Secure Rural Schools & Community Self-Determination Act

The bill authorizes revenue sharing with counties for stewardship contracting projects and provides additional flexibility in how local governments can utilize their Title III funds. It also streamlines the process of appointing USFS and BLM Resource Advisory Committee (RACs) members and ensures local representation on the committees.