



Comprehensive, bipartisan legislation to advance watershed restoration, reduce wildfire risk, improve forest health, and streamline processes to boost land management efficiency.

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THE PROBLEM:

The American West has long been prone to wildfires, but climate change, prolonged drought, and the buildup of dry fuels have increasingly intensified these fires and extended fire seasons. Wildfires today are more catastrophic—growing larger, spreading faster, and burning more land than ever before. Utah saw a total of 1,244 wildfire reports in 2024—a 54% increase from 2023 and the highest level the state has recorded since 2020. Nationwide, total acres burned rose from 2.7 million in 2023 to nearly 9 million in 2024, a 231% increase.

Forest health challenges are also increasing in frequency and severity due to climate stressors like drought and fire, and biological threats like invasive species—all of which the West is particularly vulnerable to. From 2001 to 2019, total forest area declined by 2.3%, while interior forest area decreased by up to 9.5%. The Intermountain region had the largest area losses, and the Pacific Southwest had the highest annual loss rates.

THE FIX OUR FORESTS ACT:

- **Establish new and updated programs to reduce wildfire risks** across large, high-priority “firesheds,” with an emphasis on cross-boundary collaboration.
- **Streamline and expand tools for forest health projects** (e.g., stewardship contracting, Good Neighbor Agreements) and provide faster processes for certain hazardous fuels treatments.
- **Create a single interagency program to help communities in the wildland-urban interface** build and retrofit with wildfire-resistant measures, while simplifying and consolidating grant applications.
- **Expand research and demonstration initiatives**—including a new Wildfire Intelligence Center, biochar projects, and the Community Wildfire Defense Research Program—to test and deploy cutting-edge wildfire prevention, detection, and mitigation technologies.
- **Improve reforestation, seedling supply, and nursery capacity;** establish new programs for white oak restoration; and clarify policies to reduce wildfire-related litigation and expedite forest health treatments.