



September 25, 2020

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The Honorable Senator Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein:

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) is very appreciative and excited about Senate Bill 4431 as proposed by you and Senator Daines. NAFSR is an independent, non-profit association devoted to high quality forest management. As an organization with many retired professionals, we collectively have thousands of years of experience managing natural resources with members across the entire country. Now that the bill is in conference, we offer critical suggestions to ensure its effectiveness for actual results on the ground.

We have high hopes that your bill could be the most important forest management legislation in many years. We pledge to help you improve your bill to become the landmark legislation so desperately needed under today's conditions. We are genuinely concerned with certain portions of the legislation. The Forest Service is already doing some parts. Other parts of the bill will help, but only if certain sections are changed. We recommend the following critical changes:

1. The concept of a "Habitat of Significant Value" (Section 103) should be totally excluded from the legislation since there is no need for this confusing term or additional analysis requirements under current regulations and law.

2. Fire Regime 4 is excluded from this legislation and therefore all lodgepole pine timber types will not benefit from this Act. This exclusion will negatively impact all or parts of the States of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Utah, Oregon, Washington, and Colorado.
3. The legislation states that fire protection and fire treatments need to be primarily in the WUI, with little reference to the especially important higher country watersheds. We have learned from this year's catastrophic fires that fire breaks and thinning in these watersheds do indeed make a huge difference in catching the fires before they ever reach the WUI.
4. The export legislation is excellent and a good step forward. However, it would benefit, and should apply to, all States and not just California.

The above list is just a sample of critical items needed to be addressed to solve the nation's massive fire problem. NAFSR stands ready to assist you in any way we can to help improve this legislation. We want it to become the best national forest policy that results in resilient and sustainable forests for the American people.

Please do not hesitate to ask us for any help you may need. Our only goal is to add value to this important legislation and achieve positive results on the landscape.

Sincerely,

James L. Caswell

James L. Caswell, Chair
National Association of Forest Service Retirees