



FEDERAL FOREST

RESOURCE COALITION

Press Statement on the Fix Our Forests Act of 2024: FFRC Executive Director Bill Imbergamo issued the following statement on the “Fix Our Forests Act”: June 18, 2024:

“We appreciate the bipartisan leadership Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman and Rep. Scott Peters (D-CA) have demonstrated on forest management issues. We urge the Committee to take up the *Fix Our Forests Act* quickly so it can be passed this summer, before the wildfire season ramps up.

The *Fix Our Forests Act* includes key reforms that have been approved on a bipartisan basis by the Natural Resources Committee, including common sense reforms that will encourage active management of our Federal forests to protect watersheds and communities.

We believe the fire-shed provisions, reforms to Stewardship Contracting, locally-led restoration, litigation reform, and expanded efforts to use utility corridors as fuel breaks, are a good starting point for reforms at the Forest Service.

The proposed ***litigation reforms*** are badly needed. According to data provided to us by the Forest Service, over 1.8 Billion Board Feet of Forest Service timber was under litigation in the fall of last year. That’s more than half a year’s worth of timber sales in an average year. The reforms included in the *Fix Our Forests Act* ensure that needed management can take place in a timely fashion.

We particularly applaud the provisions clarifying that there is no need for additional consultation on forest plans, particularly if the project itself has not raised any concerns about listed species. This misguided case law was opposed by the Obama Administration, which appealed it to the Supreme

Court. Enacting these reforms will free up agency resources and prevent unnecessary delays in implementing badly needed management actions.

We are also strongly supportive of ***Good Neighbor Authority*** provisions. Allowing the retention of some receipts under GNA by agency partners, including tribes, counties, and states, will encourage further participation in and investment in Good Neighbor programs at those levels.

The National Forest System is a conservation achievement of which all Americans should be proud. More than half of the National Forests are already in low to no management designations like Wilderness Areas, Wild & Scenic River corridors, and Inventoried Roadless Areas. Less than 28 percent of the National Forest System is designated as “suitable for timber production.” Yet management of National Forests remains a daunting challenge.

The Fix Our Forests Act makes significant strides in reducing litigation and ensuring accountability. On behalf of the more than 300,000 American who rely at least in part on Forest Service timber for their livelihoods, we urge the House to act on this critical bill as soon as possible.”



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