

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 16, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chair Debbie Stabenow
Senate Agriculture Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Chairwoman Stabenow:

As you develop legislation to invest in our nation's infrastructure, we urge you to invest in hazardous fuels reduction efforts to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires across our forests, rangelands, and other landscapes.

Mitigating wildfires across our forests and rangelands is critical to protecting public health, sustaining rural economies, and saving lives. Already this year, almost 45,000 fires have burned more than 5.5 million acres. Last year, almost 60,000 fires burned over 10 million acres, the most on record. Over 10 million acres also burned in 2017 and 2015. It is clear that focusing on putting out the fires is not solving the problem alone, and must be coupled with reducing the fuels loads on the landscape and providing land managers with the resources they need for maintaining healthy forests and rangelands once they have been treated.

There is a tremendous need across federal, state, and private lands for restoration work in forests all across this country as the changing climate makes them more prone to wildfire, the spread of insects and disease, and other stressors. Smoke from fires in the West now reaches from coast to coast. The U.S. Forest Service estimates that reducing wildfire risk across National Forests alone would require \$20 billion over a ten-year period. An investment of this magnitude is necessary and prudent to protect communities across the country from the threat of wildfires. We urge you to ensure that infrastructure legislation includes significant new resources to increase the pace and scale of vital forest thinning and hazardous fuels reduction projects.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

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Elizabeth Warren
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