

**HEARING TO REVIEW THE NATIONAL FOREST
SYSTEM: SUPPORTING FOREST HEALTH AND
CONFRONTING THE WILDFIRE CRISIS**

HEARING
BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTRY
OF THE
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
ONE HUNDRED EIGHTEENTH CONGRESS

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**HEARING TO REVIEW THE NATIONAL FOREST
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TUESDAY, MAY 16, 2023

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FORESTRY,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, D.C.

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to call, at 10:16 a.m., in Room 1300 of the Longworth House Office Building, Hon. Doug LaMalfa [Chairman of the Subcommittee] presiding.

Members present: Representatives LaMalfa, Kelly, Moore, Duarte, Chavez-DeRemer, Thompson (*ex officio*), Salinas, Perez, Vasquez, and Pingree.

Staff present: Adele Borne, John Busovsky, Kristin Sleeper, Wick Dudley, Erin Wilson, John Konya, Kate Fink, Michael Stein, and Dana Sandman.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. DOUG LAMALFA, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM CALIFORNIA**

The CHAIRMAN. The Committee will come to order. Welcome, and thank you for joining today's hearing entitled, *Hearing To Review the National Forest System: Supporting Forest Health and Confronting the Wildfire Crisis*. So after brief opening remarks, Members will receive testimony from our witness today, and then the hearing will be open to questions for our panel.

So, with that, good morning. Welcome to today's Forestry Subcommittee hearing. As the title reflects, today's hearing will examine how this Committee and Congress can better support the health of our forests and ongoing efforts to address the wildfire crisis. Make no mistake, our forests and rural communities continue to face an unprecedented forest health and wildfire crisis. This is an emergency that we must immediately tackle on multiple fronts.

The Forest Service plays the important role of managing our forests for ecological health, ensuring a reliable supply of domestically produced timber, and supporting rural prosperity. For decades, and particularly in the West, we have continued to see a decline in forest health on tens of millions of acres, and catastrophic wildfire on an unprecedented scale. Over the past 5 years alone we have witnessed some of the most destructive fires on record. As these fires become larger and more intense, more communities are impacted every day.

The statistics are clear. In 2015, 2017, 2020, we saw more than 10 million acres burn per year. Six of the seven largest wildfires we have seen in California, my home state, have occurred in 2020 and 2021, including two large fires that burned approximately 1 million acres each, both in my Congressional district. The August Complex Fire in 2020 burned more than 1 million acres, and the Dixie Fire of 2021 burned 960,000 acres. In 2018, we had the Camp Fire, which destroyed the Town of Paradise, took the lives of 85 people. And as a side note, the good people of my district provided me with this special gavel made with salvage wood from the Camp Fire, so I am grateful to be able to wield this in their honor as we do the good work that this Committee needs to make sure this sort of thing doesn't continue to keep happening.

This truly is an urgent crisis. We need to act now. We must dramatically increase active management and speed up the *pace and scale*—an often-used term in this Committee in these conversations about forestry—of forest restoration on tens of millions of acres of Federal and non-Federal land. This includes activities such as prescribed fires, cross-boundary fuel breaks, logging activities—yes, we will say that word, *logging*—to thin overstocked stands, the use of fire retardant, and expedited salvage logging and burned area rehabilitation after a fire.

Congress has provided the Forest Service with significant new funding to support the agency's 10 year wildfire plan. While funding is clearly needed to log and properly manage millions of acres at high risk of wildfire, I also believe that funding alone won't be enough to protect our forests and communities long-term. The agency will continue to be challenged by the regulatory hurdles that it has long faced. This includes lengthy processes under NEPA. Frivolous litigation only delays critical management activities. It also includes the latest legal challenge from extreme activists to curb the use of fire retardant, which we have discussed, which is an essential tool for firefighters to use and to slow the spread of wildfire.

Looking ahead to the next farm bill, the 2014 and 2018 reauthorizations provided the Forest Service with a variety of tools intended to help the agency better manage and incentivize more public-private partnerships, grow new markets for forest products, and help rural communities thrive. This includes expanding existing authorities such as Good Neighbor and stewardship contracting to leverage more partnerships that will increase landscape-scale restoration projects. It also includes expanded use of categorical exclusions, such as for insect and disease treatments, to help move along commonsense forest management activities with known beneficial outcomes.

The 2018 Farm Bill contained a research and development program to help encourage new markets and infrastructure for forest products, and advance tall wood building construction in the United States. We must also encourage the construction of new sawmills, and other forest product infrastructure, to ensure the long-term viability of these partners. We need to have long-term commitments so they will build them. The last farm bill also expanded the Landscape Scale Restoration Program on cross-boundary restoration, and authorized new tools for hazardous fuels on

bordering non-Federal lands. This Committee must build on the good work that we have accomplished over the past two reauthorizations, and again use this year's new farm bill to ramp up even more active forest management and restoration along the National Forest System. We should also encourage the Forest Service to use every tool in its toolbox, including new authorities provided in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act (Pub. L. 117-58), specifically, increased use of the fuel break categorical exclusion and the bill's emergency authority.

Summer is soon upon us. We have already seen fires start, and the Forest Service continues to select additional sites for restoration projects. As this year's wildfire season ramps up, and as we consider reforms for the upcoming farm bill reauthorization, today's hearing is indeed timely. So we are pleased to welcome Chief Randy Moore of the U.S. Forest Service. Chief, we look forward to your testimony, and a robust conversation on the variety of issues—how did that *robust* get in there? I hate that word—a productive conversation on the variety of issues facing the Forest Service and our rural and forested communities. We also look forward to working with you on identifying ways that this Committee can best support the urgent work that we need the Forest Service to accomplish to lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

[The prepared statement of Mr. LaMalfa follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. DOUG LAMALFA, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM CALIFORNIA

Good morning and welcome to today's Forestry Subcommittee hearing titled, *Hearing To Review the National Forest System: Supporting Forest Health and Confronting the Wildfire Crisis*.

As the title reflects, today's hearing will examine how this Committee and Congress can better support the health of our forests and ongoing efforts to address the wildfire crisis. Make no mistake, our forests and rural communities continue to face an unprecedented forest health and wildfire crisis. This is an emergency that we must immediately tackle on multiple fronts.

The Forest Service plays the important role of managing our forests for ecological health, ensuring a reliable supply of domestic timber, and supporting rural prosperity. For decades and particularly in the West, we have continued to see a decline in forest health on tens of millions of acres and catastrophic wildfire on an unprecedented scale. Over the past 5 years alone, we've witnessed some of the most destructive fires on record. As these fires become larger and more intense, more communities are impacted every day.

The statistics are clear. In 2015, 2017 and 2020, we saw more than 10 million acres burn per year. Six of the seven largest wildfires we've seen in California occurred in 2020 and 2021, which includes two fires that burned approximately 1 million acres each, both in my district.

The August Complex Fire in 2020 burned more than 1 million acres; and the Dixie Fire of 2021 burned 960,000 acres. In 2018, we had the Camp Fire which destroyed the Town of Paradise, California and took the lives of 85 people. This truly is an urgent crisis and we need to act now.

We must dramatically increase active management and speed up the pace and scale of forest restoration on tens of millions of acres of Federal and non-Federal land. This includes activities such as prescribed fires, cross-boundary fuel breaks, logging activities to thin overstocked stands, the use of fire retardant, and expedited salvage logging and burned area rehabilitation.

Congress has provided the Forest Service with significant new funding to support the agency's 10 year wildfire plan. While funding is clearly needed to log and properly manage millions of acres at high risk of wildfire, I also believe that funding alone won't be enough to protect our forests and communities. The agency will continue to be challenged by the regulatory hurdles that it has long faced. This includes lengthy processes under NEPA and frivolous litigation that only delays critical management activities. It also includes the latest legal challenge from extreme activists

to curb the use of fire retardant, an essential tool firefighters use to slow the spread of wildfire.

Looking ahead to the next farm bill, the 2014 and 2018 reauthorizations provided the Forest Service with a variety of tools intended to help the agency better manage, incentivize more public-private partnerships, grow new markets for forest products, and help rural communities thrive.

This includes expanding existing authorities such as Good Neighbor and stewardship contracting to leverage more partnerships that will increase landscape-scale restoration projects. It also includes expanded use of categorical exclusions (CE), such as for insect and disease treatments, to help move along commonsense forest management activities with known beneficial outcomes.

The 2018 Farm Bill contained a research and development program to help encourage new markets and infrastructure for forest products and advance tall wood building construction in the United States. We must also encourage the construction of new sawmills and other forest product infrastructure to ensure the long-term viability of these partners. The last farm bill also expanded the Landscape Scale Restoration program on cross-boundary restoration and authorized new tools for hazardous fuels on bordering non-Federal lands.

This Committee must build on the good work that we accomplished over the past two reauthorizations and again use the farm bill to ramp up active forest management and restoration across the National Forest System. We should also encourage the Forest Service to use every tool in its toolbox, including new authorities provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Specifically, this includes increased use of the fuel break categorical exclusion and the bill's emergency authority.

Summer is here, we've already seen fire starts and the Forest Service continues to select additional sites for restoration projects. As this year's wildfire season ramps up and as we consider reforms for the upcoming farm bill reauthorization, today's hearing is timely.

I am pleased to welcome Chief Randy Moore of the U.S. Forest Service. Chief, we look forward to your testimony and a robust conversation on the variety of issues facing the Forest Service and our rural and forested communities. We also look forward to working with you on identifying ways that this Committee can best support the urgent work that we need the Forest Service to accomplish to lessen the risk of catastrophic wildfire.

With that, I recognize Ranking Member Salinas for her opening statement.

The CHAIRMAN. With that, I recognize my colleague, Ranking Member Salinas, for her opening statement.

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. ANDREA SALINAS, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM OREGON**

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for the opportunity to hear from Chief Moore about the state of our National Forest System, and to discuss what is and isn't working in the forestry provisions of the 2018 Farm Bill, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, and the Inflation Reduction Act (Pub. L. 117-169). Forest health is a critical concern for communities around my home State of Oregon and the nation. Public and private forests alike provide critical support to our rural economies, as Mr. LaMalfa just stated. Moreover, healthy forests help mitigate climate change and foster resilience against wildfires and other climate-induced natural disasters.

One point that I continue to hear from forestry stakeholders back in my district is that the farm bill programs, and whether they are voluntary conservation incentives to tree disease research, they all play an important role in rural prosperity. So I look forward to hearing from our witness about program successes, as well as programs that need to be revamped in this year's farm bill to improve our forest health, our communities, and our climate. Thank you for being here, Chief Moore, and I look forward to your testimony.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, thank you, Ranking Member Salinas. Very economical on time there. I don't see our Chairman or Ranking Member, so I would request any other Members of the Committee that would, submit their opening statements for the record so the witness may begin his testimony, and so that there is ample time for questions during today's hearing.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Thompson follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF HON. GLENN THOMPSON, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS
FROM PENNSYLVANIA

Thank you, Chairman LaMalfa and Ranking Member Salinas.

I appreciate today's hearing and the opportunity to discuss issues before the Forest Service and the farm bill's forestry title.

For many forested and rural communities, our National Forests are critically important for supporting jobs, providing a sustainable supply of timber, and promoting forest health.

Over the past few farm bills, this Committee has provided the Forest Service with new tools and authorities intended to allow the agency to better manage. For example, we expanded the Good Neighbor and stewardship contracting authorities, and provided the insect and disease treatment authority.

We've also used the forestry title to encourage new markets through initiatives like the Wood Innovation Grant program and providing incentives to build with wood.

Along with the restoration work and fuels reduction projects that are underway and urgently needed, another priority should be to increase timber harvesting and get closer to our allowable sale quantity across the National Forest System. Doing so will have the dual benefit of supporting forest health and rural economies.

As we move forward with this farm bill cycle, I am hopeful that we can further build on the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills forestry titles.

Chief Moore, thank you for being here today. We look forward to your testimony and engaging in a robust conversation on these important issues. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. So, as I mentioned earlier, our witness today, and we are grateful to have him here, is Mr. Randy Moore, Chief of the U.S. Forest Service at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Thank you for joining us today, sir, and we will be pleased to receive your testimony. You know the gig, we have 5 minutes, but we won't be too tough on that. The timer will count down, you know the deal. Chief Moore, please begin when you are ready.

**STATEMENT OF RANDY MOORE, CHIEF, U.S. FOREST SERVICE,
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C.**

Mr. MOORE. Great. Chairman LaMalfa, Ranking Member Salinas, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to testify before this Committee. During my 40+ years of Federal service, I have worked in many locations across the country, from North Dakota to Colorado, Kansas, North Dakota, Missouri, and I have also led the Forest Service in the Eastern Region, located in Wisconsin, as well as the Pacific Southwest Region, located in California. I have witnessed tremendous change over the years, including many authorities that Congress has added through the forestry title programs in the farm bill over the past 20 years. Each new farm bill has equipped us with essential tools that have enabled us to tackle resource challenges, strengthen work with communities and partners, and equitably serve all people of America. This Committee's work on the next farm bill is central to making forests and grasslands more resilient to our communities, making them safer in the face of increasing threats from catastrophic wildfires, drought, and epidemics on forest insects and disease.

I want to be clear that reducing the threat of wildfire across landscapes is a top priority for our agency. Through the wildfire crisis strategy we have ramped up to treat the right places at the right scale using an all-hands, all-lands approach. Recent investments by Congress gives us a once in a lifetime opportunity to take bold and strategic action. We are working to do just that, to put every dollar to good use. This past January we announced investments of \$930 million in 21 high-risk landscapes in the West. This work benefits roughly 200 communities, it reduces risk to infrastructure, and it improves forests. Our wildfire crisis strategy is also guiding significant investments beyond the initial landscapes, such as community wildfire defense grants across 22 states, using about \$200 million from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We are grateful to Congress for providing the resources to seed our initial work.

Sustained execution, however, will depend on continued Federal investment coupled with funding and capacity from our partners. Tools in the farm bill play a pivotal role in reducing wildfire threats and promoting resilience. Families and individuals own most of America's forests, so we need management options that remove barriers and promote shared stewardship, as well as cross-boundary work. The farm bill is uniquely suited to do that. Through the Landscape Scale Restoration Program, we work with states to assist private landowners in achieving conservation goals. It ensures private lands remain as forests. Through Wood Innovation Grants, we are accelerating new markets for wood products and wood energy. Cross-laminated timber is one of these innovations, which is exemplified by the tallest building in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, which currently stands at 25 stories.

The farm bill also supports collaborative forest landscape restoration projects. They expand science-based collaborative work, and leverage partner dollars. This work has reduced the fire risk of more than 4.6 million acres. It will continue to help communities like those in northern California, who had recently invested \$3 million in the Western Climate Mountains Forest and the Fire Resiliency Project.

Thank you for the Good Neighbor Authority. We have reached 380 agreements across 38 states, and we have tripled the timber volume under GNA since 2018. This tool strengthened ties and worked with states, Tribes, and counties. We access expertise and capacity for treating larger landscapes. For example, we have 26 active GNA agreements with Oregon Department of Forestry that have resulted in completion of 20,000 acres of non-commercial fuel reduction, thinning work, as well as wildlife habitat improvements.

We are working hard to leverage available authorities and funding. Obviously, there is much more to do, especially with so much at stake. Your work on the next farm bill underpins our efforts to improve forest conditions and reduce threats to vulnerable communities and infrastructure. We look forward to working with you, and I want to say thank you, and I welcome your questions.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Moore follows.]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF RANDY MOORE, CHIEF, U.S. FOREST SERVICE, U.S.
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Chairman LaMalfa, Ranking Member Salinas, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to review how the farm bill supports forest health and aids our efforts to confront the wildfire crisis. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service greatly appreciates the valuable programs that Congress has authorized over the past 5 decades through the farm bill to support our mission and help us confront both long-standing and emerging threats to the nation's forests and grasslands. USDA looks forward to our work with the Subcommittee to ensure the Forest Service has the tools and flexibility it needs to address the wildfire crisis, as well as successfully implement the full breadth of the Agency's mission.

Along with the tools and investments Congress enacted in the 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act, the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Forest Service is using farm bill authorities to confront the wildfire crisis, create new markets and technology for wood products, and restore forest health and resiliency through partnerships and collaboration across landscapes.

Today, I will share recent developments in implementing our Wildfire Crisis Strategy and highlight accomplishments in our use of six areas of authority from the 2018 Farm Bill that are particularly important in addressing the wildfire crisis: (1) the reauthorized Insect and Disease treatment authority (Section 603, Healthy Forests Restoration Act), (2) the expanded Good Neighbor Authority, (3) the new Tribal forestry demonstration project, (4) the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, (5) the Wood Innovation grant programs, and (6) the Landscape Scale Restoration Program.

Climate change, wildfire and other natural disturbances do not respect land management boundaries; therefore, we need policies and management approaches—like those included in previous farm bills—that remove barriers and allow for shared stewardship and cross-boundary management. Throughout the 2018 Farm Bill, there are many authorities and provisions that assist the Forest Service in accomplishing our priority work across boundaries, particularly ecological restoration, support to communities, vital voluntary conservation efforts, and reducing hazardous fuels. Many of these provisions support our overall emphasis in USDA to work with private forest landowners and ranchers in looking for ways to foster new and better markets for them and continue to keep those producers on the land. In keeping with the Biden-Harris Administration's commitment to rebuild and strengthen the middle class from "the bottom up and the middle out," we're looking for ways in which we can encourage and increase the number of revenue streams available to private forest landowners and producers in forested communities so that they can benefit, not only from the sale of timber, crops, and livestock, but also be incentivized to conserve critical resources and invest in climate smart agriculture and forestry practices to sustain resilient, healthy forests and grasslands. Together, our work with all the innovative farm bill provisions demonstrates our commitment to shared stewardship of the nation's forests and grasslands, while strengthening relationships with Tribes, states, and local communities.

The Wildfire Crisis Strategy

In Forest Service, we are entering our second year of carrying out our 10 year strategy for confronting the wildfire crisis in the West. Our Wildfire Crisis Strategy aims to increase science-based fuels treatments by up to four times previous treatment levels, especially in those areas most at risk. Fuels treatments by the Forest Service, together with partners, have made a difference over the years. However, the scale of treatments is outmatched by the rapid increase in the scale and severity of wildfires as climate change accelerates. This strategy calls for treating up to 20 million additional acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands over the coming decade, and working with partners, including colleagues at the U.S. Department of the Interior, to treat up to 30 million additional acres on adjoining lands of multiple ownerships, while building a long-term maintenance plan. The intent for these treatments is to reduce the wildfire risk to communities, critical infrastructure, municipal water sources, and natural resources, and to restore and maintain fire-adapted landscapes so they are more resilient.

Within IIJA, Congress provided a \$1.4 billion down payment that greatly assists in putting our Wildfire Crisis Strategy into action with investments on ten landscapes in eight western states (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oregon, and Washington). Through work across the country, including on these landscapes, we completed treatments on 3.2 million acres nationally in 2022. We also accomplished these treatments in 118 of the 250 high-priority fire sheds

identified in the Wildfire Crisis Strategy. This work was accomplished despite numerous barriers including internal staffing capacity, lack of markets for small-diameter wood, and high post-fire workloads from previous seasons. The work on these acres directly reduced risk to communities, infrastructure, and critical watersheds.

IRA funding provides the Forest Service an additional \$1.8 billion for hazardous fuels funding in the wildland-urban interface. With IRA funding, we recently selected 11 additional landscapes for treatment in seven western states (Arizona, California, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, and Washington). Combined with the initial investment landscapes, our actions will span 134 of the 250 high-risk fire sheds in the western U.S., with the investment we announced in January 2023 of \$930 million on 21 landscapes. These investments will help reduce the risk of wildfire to at-risk communities, Tribal lands, critical infrastructure, utility corridors, and public water sources. We listened to our partners, the public we serve, Tribes and many others regarding what mattered most to them, where opportunity is, and where challenges remain. Their feedback and our experience on these landscapes helped us identify both challenges to implementation and enabling conditions for future success. This work will mitigate risks to approximately 200 communities within these landscapes. The Wildfire Crisis Strategy builds on current work and leverages Congressional authorities such as those from the 2018 Farm Bill highlighted below, as well as other authorities such as stewardship contracting which has proven invaluable in our work. The Wildfire Crisis Strategy is also guiding significant investments beyond these initial landscapes. For example, in its first round of funding, USDA is investing \$197 million from IIJA funding in Community Wildfire Defense Grants for 100 projects benefiting 22 states and seven Tribes. This initial round of investments will assist communities in developing Community Wildfire Protection Plans, and fund immediate actions to lower the risk of wildfire on non-Federal land where a Community Wildfire Protection Plan is already in place. Taken together, these actions and investments under the Wildfire Crisis Strategy will strengthen partnerships and support our work to mitigate wildfire risk and restore forest health and resiliency over the next decade.

The Forest Service is very grateful to Congress for providing the resources through the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act to seed our initial work and put the Wildfire Crisis Strategy in motion. It is important to note that fully executing the strategy to treat 50 million acres will take continued Federal investment, coupled with funding and capacity delivered from states and all of our partners in this work. I look forward to continuing this important discussion with this panel and others.

2014 and 2018 Farm Bill Implementation Highlights

Insect and Disease Provisions

The 2014 Farm Bill's Insect and Disease provisions (Section 8204) set requirements for designating affected NFS lands, enabling streamlined environmental review procedures to expedite projects that reduce the risk and extent of, or increase the resilience to, insect or disease infestations. Approximately 77.5 million acres across NFS lands have been designated under Section 8204 as already experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, insect and disease infestations. We work with state forestry agencies to survey almost 500 million acres across the nation each year to understand where infestations are occurring. We have the partnerships to work across boundaries—on NFS; Tribal; state and private lands; as well as other Federal lands.

Through amendments to the 2003 Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA), the 2014 Farm Bill also categorically excluded from the requirements of NEPA certain insect and disease projects that meet certain stringent criteria, including an acreage limitation, and are located within the designated treatment areas.

The 2018 Farm Bill, through amendment to HFRA, established an additional categorical exclusion for projects that reduce hazardous fuels to be carried out in the designated treatment areas and that also meet other specific criteria and acreage limitations (Section 8407). As of March 1, 2023, the Forest Service has signed decisions for, or is in the process of analyzing, 287 projects encompassing approximately 565,000 acres in 35 states using these categorical exclusions. Using the farm bill amendments to HFRA Section 602(d), as of March 1, 2023, the Forest Service has expedited the NEPA process, with signed decisions or analysis underway, on 26 projects involving an EIS or an EA, encompassing over 1.5 million acres in 11 states. Additionally, the 2018 Farm Bill extended authorization of the categorical exclusion from HFRA Section 605 for wildfire resilience. As of March 1, 2023, the Forest Service has signed decisions for, or is in the process of analyzing, 79 projects encompassing approximately 125,000 acres in 34 states using the wildfire resilience categorical exclusion. Taken together, projects carried out under all these authori-

ties help improve forest health while also reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire to people, communities, utility corridors, water sources, and other natural resources.

Good Neighbor Authority

The Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) allows the Forest Service to work with states, Tribes, and counties to perform treatments across larger landscapes through partnerships. In 2014, this authority allowed the Forest Service to enter into cooperative agreements or contracts with states and Puerto Rico to perform authorized restoration services by our partners on Federal lands. The 2018 Farm Bill expanded this valuable authority to Tribes and counties and allows states to maintain revenues generated from the sale of National Forest System timber for future GNA activities (Section 8624). As of March 1, 2023, the Forest Service has completed 380 GNA agreements in 38 states to accomplish a variety of restoration work. Timber volume awarded under GNA agreements tripled from 2018 to 2022, and we completed over 178,000 acres of restoration-based activities through GNA agreements in 2022.

Our GNA agreements are predominately with state agencies, but also include 16 Tribal agreements and 15 agreements with counties as of March 1, 2023. In our Southern Region alone, for example, we have GNA agreements with one or more of the state agencies in each state and these have assisted greatly in restoring and improving forest health on thousands of acres affected by Southern Pine Beetle infestation and other natural disasters. Under a Good Neighbor Agreement with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, we will work to integrate cultural and traditional ecological knowledge with silviculture and fire management on the Pisgah and Nantahala National Forests in North Carolina. In the Pacific Northwest Region, the Washington Department of Natural Resources used GNA with us to replace a perched culvert with a bridge, allowing restoration of critical upstream salmon habitat on the Olympic National Forest and improving public access. GNA authority is extremely beneficial because it improves the Agency's access to state, Tribal, and county expertise and capacity to accomplish restoration and hazardous fuels reduction work across larger landscapes. This authority also supports working and learning with our partners so we can apply collective knowledge broadly on public lands.

Tribal Forestry

USDA is responsible for managing millions of acres of Federal lands and waters that contain cultural and natural resources of significance and value to Tribes, including sacred religious sites, burial sites, wildlife resources, and sources of Indigenous foods and medicines. The 2018 Farm Bill authorized a new Tribal forestry demonstration project for Tribes to propose projects on NFS lands that border or are adjacent to Tribal lands using the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act. This new Forest Service authority allows the agency to enter contracts and agreements with Indian Tribes to protect the Tribal lands and resources from threats such as fire, insects, and disease while being informed by Tribal values and knowledge. The demonstration authority pertains exclusively to the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (TFPA). As of January 2023, agreements using this authority have been executed with Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Pueblo of Acoma, Pueblo of Jemez, The Tulalip Tribes, Kalispel Tribe, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Yakama Nation, Mechoopda Indian Tribe, Pueblo of Santa Clara, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians. These agreements are implementing vegetation management projects to protect Tribal assets and reduce hazardous fuels in critical and cultural landscapes while strengthening our government-to-government relationships with Tribal nations to achieve shared stewardship and co-stewardship objectives.

In one noteworthy example, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians and the Umpqua National Forest in Oregon signed one of the largest of all Forest Service TFPA proposals, and the largest Forest Service self-determination agreement to date, to reduce fuels in strategically important areas of NFS lands that border Tribal lands, the wildland-urban interface, and private property. This collaborative work will simultaneously reduce fuel concentrations enough to enable firefighters to use treatment areas as potential control lines in the event of future wildfires and reduce the severity and intensity of fire in the treated areas.

The IIJA authorizes the Forest Service to fund and implement projects using GNA and TFPA. As of March 1, 2023, we have received 17 TFPA proposals exceeding \$8.7 million for FY23 with a projected \$25 million in subsequent years. This is a demonstrated commitment to invest in collaborations and co-stewardship as articulated in Joint Secretarial Order 3403, *Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters*.

Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program

The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized and increased the authorization for appropriations for the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) (Section 8629). Through the CFLRP, we can accomplish critical collaborative, science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes. These projects produce significant outcomes on the landscape, including reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfire, eradicating invasive plants, restoring stream habitat, and accomplishing vital forest vegetation work through planting, seeding, and natural regeneration. Since the program inception in 2009 through Fiscal Year 2022, the Forest Service has funded 31 CFLRP landscapes nationwide, with fifteen such landscapes currently receiving funding. These projects have advanced treatment on over 4.6 million acres to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire, with treatments prioritized in high-risk areas. CFLRP projects have improved habitat for over 70 species of animals and plants and have enhanced over 1,800 miles of stream habitat. In addition, CFLRP has significant economic benefits in rural communities, supporting an average of nearly 5,000 jobs per year and a total of \$2.5 billion in total local labor income to date, including youth engagement and job training opportunities.

Wood Innovations

The Timber Innovation Act from the 2018 Farm Bill aims to encourage research on innovative wood building materials in addition to codifying the existing Wood Innovation Grant Program and establishing a new grant program, the Community Wood Grant Program. The research component of the Act is delivered through the Forest Products Lab which is part of the Forest Service Research & Development Deputy Area. The Wood Innovations staff within the State, Private, and Tribal Deputy Area supports technical and financial assistance for innovative use of wood.

Through implementation of the farm bill authority, the Forest Products Lab partners and collaborates with the wood products industry, conservation organizations and universities to analyze the safety of tall wood building materials and to increase the use of mass timber in buildings. The Lab also produces analyses covering all the stages of the life cycle of wood-based products and uses. Over the last 3 years, the Lab provided technical and financial investments for analyses to support the use of mass timber in multi-story structures located in high seismic zones. The Forest Products Lab also supports implementation of the Wood Innovations Act through agreements with universities to conduct research on innovative wood products for building construction. The Forest Products Lab currently has 78 agreements with 36 Universities and organizations.

The Wood Innovation Grant program and the Community Wood Grant Program support Forest Service efforts to build innovative markets for wood products and wood energy that support rural economies with more jobs and income. The financial support provided by these programs help create additional and more robust markets and processing capacity for sustainable forest management and hazardous fuels reduction.

The Wood Innovation Grant Program (Section 8643) allows the Forest Service to award grants to individuals, public or private entities, or state, local or Tribal governments for the purpose of advancing the use of innovative wood products. The program stimulates and expands sustainable wood products and wood energy markets, with a focus on mass timber, tall wood buildings, renewable wood energy, and technological development that supports fuel reduction and sustainable forest management.

The Community Wood Grant Program (Section 8644) supports facility expansion or new equipment for thermal wood energy (wood-to-heat) projects and innovative wood products manufacturing. In Fiscal Year 2022, the Forest Service awarded over \$32 million in grants for 99 projects using these two authorities. In January 2023, we announced a Funding Opportunity for these programs, offering \$41 million to spark innovation and create new markets for wood products and renewable wood energy. In total, 316 proposals were received, further demonstrating the need to support and build markets and manufacturing capacity. This was made possible in part by the IIJA and the IRA.

The farm bill has catalyzed U.S. growth in mass timber construction, supporting forest management and creating jobs. Twelve new mass timber plants have been constructed across the U.S. and over 1,600 buildings utilizing mass timber construction have been built, are under construction, or are in the design phase. For example, Vaagen Timbers in Colville, Washington, produces cross-laminated timber from forest restoration on the Colville National Forest and employs over 40 people. Building with wood is beneficial to our environment as it replaces traditional building materials that can take significant energy and air emissions to manufacture. It's

commonsense but worth underscoring that trees keep much of the carbon that they store over their lifetime when they're milled into long-lived wood products.

Through the Community Wood Grant Program, we have supported 22 projects for wood energy facilities to produce heat or combined heat and power, as of March 1, 2023. Located in a range of facilities including schools, businesses, manufacturing, and government, these projects use over 136,000 green tons of wood residues and chips annually. This supports renewable energy goals, economic development, and cost-effective heating. One project benefitting from a wood energy grant in Truckee, California, produces electricity through a biomass energy system for 14 municipal buildings, using hazardous fuels material removed from high wildfire risk areas. An additional 12 projects were funded that supported innovative wood products technology for manufacturing facilities.

Landscape Scale Restoration Program

Authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill, the Landscape Scale Restoration Program is a competitive grant program that promotes collaborative, science-based restoration of priority forest landscapes and furthers priorities identified in a science-based restoration strategy, such as a State Forest Action Plan. The Forest Service delivers the program through our long-standing partnerships with State Forestry agencies, Tribes, conservation organizations and other partners to deliver conservation projects on non-Federal land.

From 2018–2022 the Forest Service awarded 255 competitive grants to support projects to 46 states, and five Territories. \$62,000,000 in Federal funding leveraged approximately \$71,000,000 in additional partner support. Funded projects reflect local forest conditions and state and regional priorities. In the western United States, many of the Landscape Scale Restoration projects reduce wildfire risk and restore priority watersheds. In the Northeast and Midwest, projects protect water quality and mitigate invasive species that threaten forest ecosystem health, wildlife, climate resilience, and economic value of forests. In the South, wildlife habitat protection to conserve threatened and endangered species is an important priority to ensure continued economic productivity of rural working lands.

In FY 2023, the Landscape Scale Restoration Program issued its first Request for Proposals for Federally Recognized Tribes and Alaska Native Corporations to restore priority forest landscapes on Tribal land, including Tribal trust land. By working across landownerships, including on Tribal Forest land, the Landscape Scale Restoration program is an important tool to restore resilience to the nation's forests.

More recently, with support from IRA funding, the Forest Service is standing up new programs which leverage the flexible Landscape Scale Restoration authorities given to us by Congress in 2018, but which represent a new and exciting body of work. We are in the process of developing these new programs to provide incentives to Tribes and non-industrial private forest landowners to implement climate smart forestry practices that improve forest resilience and reduce barriers for underserved landowners and family forest owners to participate in carbon markets and other emerging market opportunities to keep working lands working. As we deliver these programs, we will also leverage the Forest Stewardship Program to provide needed technical assistance to individual landowners. These forestry experts will provide management advice and assistance to help landowners, on a voluntary basis, implement practices and access emerging market opportunities, including carbon markets. The Forest Stewardship Program is a partnership between the Forest Service and state forestry agencies to assist private forest landowners who are responsible for the stewardship of 300 million acres of forests (nearly 40 percent of the nation's forests).

Congressionally Authorized Land Conveyances

I am pleased to report the completion of all three NFS land conveyances authorized by the 2018 Farm Bill:

- Section 8627, Kisatchie National Forest parcel in Louisiana to Collins Camp Properties;
- Section 8631, Okhissa Lake parcel on the Homochitto National Forest in Mississippi to Scenic Rivers Development Alliance for rural economic development; and
- Section 8707, parcel to Dolores County, Colorado for the West Fork Fire Station.

Conclusion

We recognize that this Subcommittee and others expend significant effort to draft, negotiate, and pass a new farm bill every 5 years. We appreciate your efforts and look forward to providing input as you frame and develop the 2023 Farm Bill.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Chief Moore. I appreciate that. I see our full Committee Chairman, Mr. Thompson, has joined us here. Would you like to incorporate a statement or questions up front at this moment, sir?

**OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GLENN THOMPSON, A
REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM PENNSYLVANIA**

Mr. THOMPSON. Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, I appreciate that. Thanks to the Chairman, Ranking Member, and to the Chief. Chief, it is good to see you. Thank you for being here. It is much appreciated.

I appreciate today's hearing, and the opportunity to discuss the issues before the Forest Service as we work at preparing the farm bill's forestry title. Now, for many forested and rural communities, our National Forests are critically important for supporting jobs, providing a sustainable supply of timber, promoting forest health, and quite frankly, backfilling where we no longer have property tax, in support of our municipalities, our school districts, our counties, and because of those public lands.

Now, over the past few farm bills, this Committee has provided the Forest Service with new tools and authorities intended to allow the agency to better manage. We did that specifically in the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills. For example, we expanded the Good Neighbor and stewardship contracting authorities, and provided the insect and disease treatment authority. Other categorical exemptions: more landscape approach. And we have also used the forestry title to encourage new markets through initiatives like the Wood Innovation Grant Program and providing incentives to build with wood.

Along with the restoration work and fuels reduction projects that are underway and urgently needed, another priority should be to increase timber harvesting and get closer to our allowable sale quantity across the National Forest System, that sustainable growth rate. Doing so would have the dual benefit of supporting forest health and, quite frankly, economic health in those surrounding communities. As we move forward with this farm bill cycle, I am hopeful we can further build on the success of the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills forestry titles. Chief, I look forward to hearing from you what additional tools that the members and the employees of the Forest Service need to be able to do their job.

Chief, how are we doing overall, in terms of and on the national scope within the Forest System of green stick harvesting towards that overall sustainable growth rate, and are there some forests that you can point to that would be best that are doing well, that we may be able to look at their best practices of why they are able to get closer to where we need them to be for both forest health, and, quite frankly, economic health within those communities?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Congressman, thank you. First of all, to be able to explain the whole timber program, and—I have 2 minutes, it may take 15, but I will try to abbreviate it in 2 minutes. But in general, we have a number of forests across the U.S. that are really maximizing their opportunities to use the tools to provide a timber supply. Keep in mind, though, it is about more than just providing commercial timber. It is about creating health and resiliency in our

landscape, which requires us to look at removing some of those hazardous fuels that are not commercial grade timber.

One of the things that we are really trying to push to complement the existing infrastructure is wood innovations, and we have invested quite a bit of money looking at wood innovations to utilize the type of material that we have out there that is serving as ladder fuels for these fires. It is cross-laminated timber, and the innovation behind it is about biochar, it is about biofuels, it is about non-cellulosic material. It is the type of material that you can put into concrete to strengthen the concrete. And I think the more that we diversify the current infrastructure, the better able we will be to remove that material off of a forest and create economic opportunities.

Mr. THOMPSON. So, if I may, because I am running out of time here, if you wouldn't mind following up in writing, in terms of the whole question about how well we are doing towards that sustainable growth rate as an overall system, and then my follow-up question would be—I know that you all are doing great things, I follow closely our Forest Service lab professionals, they do a great job. The question I have, though, is it seems like we have been in a whole talking pattern about that, and that is only going to work when we can get it to commercialization. When we get that—all the great things you talked about, and probably more that we can talk about in the future—when we get that to commercialization, then we actually have a vehicle to improve forest health.¹

And, quite frankly, we need to concurrently work on economic health of those communities. That was the promise that our predecessors made when we took that land out of the private-sector to form the National Forests. So, Chief, thank you for being here today. Mr. Chairman, I apologize. My time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. No apologies needed, Mr. Chairman, I would like to now recognize Ranking Member Salinas for 5 minutes.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chief Moore, as you noted, climate change is exacerbating the wildfire crisis that the nation is facing. Wildfire seasons are expected to become longer, and fires to become more frequent, more extensive, and more severe. In Oregon wildfire risks are growing. We saw that with the Bootleg Fire last year, and even the wetter and more populous region west of the Cascades, which includes my district, it is likely to see a significant increase in wildfire activity. So to better prepare for and respond to the wildfire crisis, we need to expand our forestry workforce.

Chief Moore, can you talk a bit about the role of the civilian conservation centers in training foresters and firefighters, and outline what more can be done to support job training, and how we get more young people into the hiring pipeline?

Mr. MOORE. Thank you, Congresswoman. The Civilian Conservation Corps is a great tool to bring young citizens into this fire-fighting community, and we also have other opportunities with our Job Corps centers, training them to become wildland firefighters, as well as serving in other roles within the agency. We just recently looked at hiring 100 additional forestry trainee-type profes-

¹ Editor's note: the information referred to is located on p. 41.

sionals. We have programs in place where we provide college tuition, in some cases, for some of our young people to have a chance to go to college and pursue a career in natural resource management. So, we have a number of programs that are available that we are beginning to pursue, and now more so than what we have in the past, because over the last 20 years we have been losing resource professionals in the organization, based on the conditions on the ground with fires, but also just the whole budget situation.

So, with the bipartisan infrastructure legislation, as well as IRA, we have been building capacity within the agency, and we are looking at a lot of different avenues to bring in young people into the organization, particularly resource management.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. And, Chief Moore, in your testimony, you highlighted several agency programs that have a proven track record of furthering reforestation efforts, reducing wildfire risk, and improving forest health, and this includes, as you mentioned, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, which has funded several projects in my home State of Oregon. Can you talk a bit about how these Forest Service programs also support the economic stability of our rural communities?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. The collaborative projects have been a real boon to a lot of small rural communities. And if I look at what we currently have on deck, we have about 30 large-scale projects across 15 states. And when I look at what they have been able to do, they have been able to significantly decrease the potential for fire across the landscapes. These projects are available to states, Tribes, as well as local communities. And in terms of investments, and the different approaches we are taking to landscape-scale restoration, we have selected 31 landscapes across 15 states, and 17 of those landscapes are in 11 states, and they are currently receiving funding in our FY23 bill.

In short, there is a lot of great value in leveraging with our partners. In fact, when we look at the amount that is invested in our collaborative projects, for every dollar that the Forest Service invests in those collaborative projects, it returns about \$1.81. So, it has proven to be a really great value, in terms of leveraging Federal dollars with the local communities.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. Now I just want to talk next-gen forestry technologies and innovation.

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

Ms. SALINAS. Chief Moore, can you provide us an overview of the new tools and technologies used to support reforestation activities, and is there more that can be done using drones, geospatial, and remote sensing technology to support the work of the Forest Service?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, Congresswoman, there is always more to be done. We are jumping into the technological phase fairly rapidly. We have trained well over 100 certified pilots for drones. We are looking at the application of drones for prescribed burning, for natural resource management. We are looking at the use of satellite data, combined with our FIA data to—the Forest Inventory Analysis data to do ground—of what we think we see from this—from the air. We are moving into the technological age.

One other example I would share with you is—I believe it is in California, where, instead of using our lookout towers, we have put a set of cameras across the landscape to spot smoke or fires as they happen. So, we are pursuing technology in a much bigger way. We know that we have much more to do, much more to learn, but that is an area that we see a huge advantage for us in the future.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ms. Salinas. I will recognize Mr. Kelly from Mississippi for 5 minutes.

Mr. KELLY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chief Moore, how can we work together to prioritize and advance the use of wood, like mass timber, at scale in the marketplace? What more do we need to do to use mass timber in rural communities to build affordable housing, schools, hospitals, and other critical infrastructure?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Congressman, I think what we have to do is further refine the research around cross-laminated timber. Even though cross-laminated timber has a great future ahead of us, we have not refined the research to the degree that we need to be using small diameter, low-value material. Right now, we are using it in a bigger way, but we are using commercial grade timber in cross-laminated timber. The key to cross-laminated timber in this country is to be able to refine the research in a way that it can use low-value, small-diameter material, because that is what we have in abundance. And so that is our focus. We are working with the university systems, we are working with corporate scientists, as well as the Federal scientists, to look at continuing to work in that arena. It is very promising, though.

Right now, we have about 1,600 buildings that are built with cross-laminated timber. We have another 12 new facilities coming online. And so, while it is showing a lot of promise, we want to take that whole research down to use a different type of materials, because I think you will see a huge boom once we are able to refine the research in that way.

Mr. KELLY. And I have been on this Committee for 8 years, and on this Subcommittee all of those, or at least most of those. One of the things that concerns me most is our inability to manage the timber in our forests, especially out West. We don't do controlled burns, we don't have the manpower, and then—and a lot of times that is for climate protection, is the reason we don't do controlled burns—and then we get these massive wildfires that create much more pollution and climate problems than if we had done the controlled burns. What are we doing to make sure that we are doing the controlled burns, and that we are managing our forests, especially out West, properly?

Mr. MOORE. So, Congressman, after last year's fire in Hermit's Peak, I called a 90 day pause in our prescribed burning, and that was to give us an opportunity to really look at how we are using that program. And we also brought a lot of our technical specialists from down south, Mississippi included, to look at how the South is maintaining the ecosystem that they have established through prescribed burning, or controlled burning. And so what we are doing is taking lessons learned in the South, and seeing how they might apply in the West. And now what we are looking to do is bring all of that together. I am going to be releasing a report here fairly soon

looking at some changes in our prescribed fire, particularly out West.

We can't talk about our success in prescribed burning because when one fire gets away, you have seen the damage that it can do. Because I could sit here and tell you that prescribed burning goes the way it should go 99.84 percent of the time, but that .16 percent when it gets away, we have lots of examples of the damage that it can do, and it is because of the condition of our landscapes. And that is why the conversation needs to be around vegetation removal in a much bigger way, but also looking at the innovation that is needed to utilize the type of vegetation that we have on our landscapes, because it is burning down communities, it is creating carbon in our environment, and it just—nothing is good about it.

Mr. KELLY. And finally, my last question is—we gave you \$10 billion from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and Inflation Reduction Act, and we are having a problem both recruiting and retaining employees. How can we best manage this money, or what can we do in Congress to make sure that we have the great Forestry Service employees who are both there, and who are experienced, and who are capable of carrying out. What authorities do you need from Congress to help you with this?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I think we have to first identify the type of employees that we are talking about. If we are talking about firefighters, I think we have a lot going on now of how we can recruit that. The challenge that I am having, as Chief of the Forest Service, is this: We have things in place on a temporary basis for firefighters, but what it doesn't recognize, and this applies mostly in the South and the East, is that we have what we call reserve firefighters who fight fires. In fact, we have—

Mr. KELLY. And if I can, I only got 17 seconds, I would just say that everything you do to the left of a fire is—pays off ten times in dividends to what we do on the right side in firefighting. And I only have 8 seconds, Chief, but thank you, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Now, we will now recognize the lady from Washington, Ms. Gluesenkamp Perez, please.

Ms. PEREZ. And thank you, Mr. LaMalfa. And thank you, Chief Moore, for being here this morning. I would like to start by highlighting the challenges resource-heavy counties face as they work to support their communities with limited income streams. Skamania County, in the southeast corner of my district, is 80 percent National Forest Service land, which represents a significant part of Gifford Pinchot National Forest. Counties like mine often feel like we have to come to the Federal Government with our hands out to make ends meet, and I want to talk about ways to work towards economic independence.

Secure Rural Schools has been a critical program, but it does not provide consistent income levels. One idea I have heard addressing this is community forests. Productive land from the Gifford Pinchot would be managed by the county, with supervision and continued ownership by the Forest Service. However, the income benefits would flow to the county, with a small percentage going to the Forest Service as a management fee. So, Chief Moore, I would love to hear your thoughts on this proposal, and any comments you have

about how counties can partner with the Forest Service to find more sustainable income levels.

Mr. MOORE. Congresswoman, I think that is the challenge, that you have laid out here, how do we continue to collaborate to find ways forward? If I look at GNA as an example, the Good Neighbor Authority, right now we are making a lot of great progress with states. We are not making the same level of progress with counties and Tribes. Part of the reason, I believe, is because the counties and the Tribes can't retain the receipts the same as states, so I think if that is one of the changes that takes place, I think you will see much more—a much greater use of GNA authorities across our country.

In terms of where do we go from here, I think the collaborations have identified a number of things for us, and one of the things that is identified for us is that together that—we are better together than we are separate, and that we need to continue to work toward this goal of doing landscape treatments out on our forests. And basically not just the forests, but just the landscapes in general, of all jurisdictions and ownerships.

Ms. PEREZ. Thank you, Chief Moore. One thing I hear a lot about, and building on the questions from my colleague, Representative Kelly, are the challenges faced by the Forest Service employees in finding housing.

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

Ms. PEREZ. The Cowlitz Valley Ranger District, located in the Gifford, my staff has heard stories about seasonal employees who are living out of their cars due to the lack of affordable housing. I know the Forest Service supplies some housing, but it tends to be insufficient. The area surrounding the Gifford Pinchot is rural, and also lacks a sufficient affordable housing stock. All this means that many ranger districts are unable to attract or retain staff.

In addition, there are already many who already live in these understaffed ranger districts who are willing, but unable, to gain employment with the Forest Service due to the challenges navigating U.S.A. Jobs' application process. Getting a résumé through electronic filters and into the hands of a real person is a very difficult process, and we have all heard about folks who know how to game the algorithm to advance their résumé through these electronic systems. So, constituents often ask if local hiring preferences, much like existing hiring preferences for veterans, could help reduce Forest Service staff turnover, help build community trust, and reduce staffing shortages.

My first question is what can the Forest Service do with regard to housing to reduce turnover, and my second question is what can the Forest Service do to simplify the application process for residents of the ranger district seeking employment with the agency?

Mr. MOORE. So let me start by saying anytime we have an employee sleeping in their car, it is an embarrassment, so I will start there. I think the housing issue is much bigger than the Forest Service. I think this is a problem in our communities. If there are no available housing, there is nothing for our firefighters to stay in. Where there is available housing, are they affordable? And so that is the other issue. It is not just availability, but it is affordability. These are community problems, not just Forest Service, and

I think that we need to bring all of our communities together to figure out solutions, because we are there for a service, and that is to protect the communities. But the communities also have to work with us to find those doable solutions.

So that is where we are, in terms of housing. We also have the issue of mental health. Our firefighters are working now—instead of fire seasons it is fire years, and as such, they are always gone from home because they serve this country. They go all across—wherever there is a fire, they are there, so there is very little time for their families, and after a while, it wears.

Ms. PEREZ. And, excuse me, in our last few seconds here, I would love to extend an offer to have you come out and visit Skamania County or my district, come out for of our timber carnivals. It will be a good time, I guarantee it.

Mr. MOORE. I would love to. Thank you for the invitation.

The CHAIRMAN. Does the gentlelady yield back?

Ms. PEREZ. Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. Thank you. Boy, great points on the SRS, and the ability to keep that going. It is a battle every year, and on the housing side, when you see an *L.A. Times* article where they are debating whether, a town like Greenville, in my district, for example, should that be rebuilt?

Ms. PEREZ. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. But why do we keep building these towns back up? These used to be where the people lived that got the resources that we all use, whether it is a mining town, a timber town, or an ag town, for that matter. So I guess the question is do we want to have these products, and do we want to have people take care of them. Thank you. Now I will recognize Mr. Moore from Alabama.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate your robust leadership on this Committee, and I want to thank Chief Moore for being here today as well. Chief, in Alabama the vast majority of our forests are privately owned, working lands, actually, and so—I think that in my Second District alone 4.4 million acres of private forestland, and we support 21,000 jobs, and \$7.9 million a year in payroll. So, trees are a big business in our district.

But according to the extension service in Alabama, more trees are taken due to disease and pests than are actually harvested for profit. So, Chief, can you expand on efforts of the Forest Service to collaborate with the private forest owners to manage pests and disease, please, sir?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. If I look specifically in your district, with the brown spot needle blight, that is a problem down there. We have a lot of data on that blight, and we are working with the university system, as well as our earth scientists, trying to find solutions to that. But we do have extensive data, and that is a good place to start, and we are working with state partners down there to find solutions that are doable. So that is where we are with the blight.

In terms of disease and insects, throughout the years we have had problems with disease and insects, and we are beginning to see that we need to treat this the same as we do wildfires, at that landscape level, because disease and insect don't respect jurisdictional boundaries like we do. And in order to do that, we need to

partner with our state partners, our local leaders in these local communities, as well as the Tribes, looking at solutions on how we address these issues.

Depending on where you are across the country, there are different things that contribute to the conditions that we are in, and so, if I was to look at Mississippi itself, that is different than, say, looking at Michigan, the Emerald Ash Borer being a problem there, and it is different than looking out West, on some of the pine beetle issues there. I think every part of the country has similar problems, but the bottom line is that this is a problem for all of us. Our scientists are working diligently with the research, and our state and private partners are working diligently with state and local partners and trying to address that in a way that is acceptable.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Chief, I am going to change gears on you, but as fire season looms on the horizon, the Forest Service is being sued by extreme environmentalists over this fire retardant. It is a critical tool for fire suppression and for control. Do you agree that fire retardant is a critical tool, and what must we do to keep it in the arsenal to protect lives and property, and how are you working with the EPA to work through this issue with them this year?

Mr. MOORE. So, Congressman, fire retardant is a critical safety tool, not only for our firefighters, but for these communities that are experiencing these wildfires. What we are currently trying to do is work with the EPA on acquiring a Clean Water Act permit so that, depending on which way the conversation goes, that we are going to be trying to cover our bases. The other thing that is maybe not widely recognized is that we have a number of states that also will be requiring permits under the Clean Water Act. And so we may be required to get permits from the states, as well as from EPA.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. How far along are we in the process, Chief? I know that sometimes these permits and the EPA can drag out. Do you feel like you are making success? Are you making any kind of headway with them?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I believe that we are making success with EPA. I suspect, though, it will probably take another 2 or 3 years to get that done. But—and that doesn't include what we might be required to do with certain states—or different states.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. So what do you do in the meantime? If you are waiting to get—

Mr. MOORE. Well, we are going to continue to use retardant until we are ordered not—

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. Until you get a ruling?

Mr. MOORE. If we are ordered not to. I don't know if it will come to that, but we are going to use it until we are told not to.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. And I think you should. What are the options if you can't use it? What do you do, Chief?

Mr. MOORE. Well, we don't have an option other than water.

Mr. MOORE of Alabama. All right. Thank you. I appreciate your time. And with that, Mr. Chairman, I will yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Moore, for that robust line of questioning. Remember the size of the gavel we got here. The islander from Maine, Ms. Pingree, is up next, 5 minutes.

Ms. PINGREE. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and we do have trees on islands in Maine. We have trees everywhere in Maine. We are the most forested state in the nation, so we care deeply about this topic, and I appreciate having this hearing today. Thank you very much, Chief, for being with us. I get the chance to see you both here and in the Appropriations Committee, so—always happy to hear about the work that you are doing.

And I have been really pleased to hear some of my colleagues talk about the markets for wood, and some of the innovative wood products that I know the Forest Service is very engaged in supporting. In our state we are now just about to open a new facility that will create wood fiber insulation products for the home, and that is a conversion of an old paper mill. Like so many places, we have lost some of our traditional wood industries, particularly paper, and to see the conversion of these mills into other things, like wood fiber insulation, biochar, some of the products that you have already talked about, is very exciting for our state, to see that happening.

So I just want to follow up a little bit more on that. You talked about more research needs to be done. Is that a financial issue, is that language? What else can we be helping you do to do that? Is most of that taking place at universities, or some of it at the Forest Service Wood Products Lab? And I guess the other question I have is—I feel like sometimes we also have to have an outreach and education campaign, that architects and builders need to see the opportunities, things like cross-laminate timber than can be stronger than steel, and just some of those opportunities.

Also, I think most people don't understand—they are so concerned about cutting a tree that they forget if you cut a tree, and you use it as part of a construction project, that carbon stays in that tree, and you have actually sequestered that carbon on a permanent basis. So that is an important principle I think that architects and other builders need to understand so—of—I have talked a lot, but do you have some thoughts you would like to share?

Mr. MOORE. So, Congresswoman, you have answered that better than I could.

Ms. PINGREE. Sorry.

Mr. MOORE. But as you know, Maine has been a leader in not only using some of this innovative technology, but also being a part of creating it. So I want to compliment you, and the State of Maine, for how you have really jumped into the arena of innovations around wood. I think—when we look at the wood innovations and community wood facility grants, right now we have funded about 99 projects, and we spent about \$32 million, which doubles our previous year's work. We are going to continue to move in this direction, because we feel that, as we look at the infrastructure in this country, we need what we currently have, and we also need it to be stable. We also need to diversify the infrastructure we have in this country now by using some of the new technology and the innovations that we are discovering through funding, and working with states and universities, as well as Tribal, and other Federal partners.

I think it is a growth business. I think, when you look at biofuels, even biomass, there is still a use for that, because if you

are not able to use it, then you are left with the results of wildfires on the landscape. And so it is in all of our best interests to figure out ways to utilize this material that we can create jobs out of, particularly in our small rural communities.

Ms. PINGREE. Yes.

Mr. MOORE. And so I would just add that to the statement that you have made, because I think you asked a question, but you also answered it in many ways, in terms of innovation, and where we are trying to go with it.

Ms. PINGREE. Well—and I really appreciate the work you are doing on low-value, small-diameter wood, because that is often the challenge that we are dealing with, and so many of these products lends themselves to that. One quick other question I wanted to ask you about. In the IRA there is about \$450 million to support small and under-served private landowners with climate mitigation as resilience practices through their participation in—it says emerging private markets—I think that means voluntary carbon markets. So much of our forest has been able to take advantage of offsets, and the ability to make another source of income. That is already a market out there, but a lot of small landowners can't. Can you talk a little bit about how the Forest Service is working on that?

Mr. MOORE. So in terms of carbon offsets—so the Forest Service's work is not about offsets in carbon. It is about total reduction and carbon sequestration. Now, working with partners allows us to work in different ways, but in terms of the Forest Service—and I was—venture to say the Federal Government in general, we are looking at total carbon reduction, and that is different than the private market, where it is looking at carbon offsets. So, I want to say that.

And the second thing, and here we partner with Maine as well on several of these projects, but we have the University of Vermont, even, \$4 million in FY23, and this is based on Congressional directed funding in these areas. One of the places that you did mention, that I would like to bring up, is the National Agroforestry Center.

Ms. PINGREE. Yes.

Mr. MOORE. And you made a statement earlier about education, and that is an opportunity to demonstrate really a strong direct link between the latest research and giving that to the people who can put it to work. And we are discovering a lot of ways, in terms of how we help farmers out. I think there are discoveries yet to be made on how that center is working. But there is a lot of interest, and agroforestry has really increased over the past few years, and the demand for training right now has outpaced our capacity to provide it.

Ms. PINGREE. Great. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting me go over my time, and I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. You are welcome. I will now recognize the gentleman with the lakefront property on Lake Tulare—

Mr. DUARTE. That is the other Portagee.

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Duarte, yes, from California, 5 minutes.

Mr. DUARTE. I am a little bit north of Lake Tulare, but thank you. Thank you, Chief for being here today, very much appreciated. We talked about a lot of good: commonsense business principles,

communities where people can't get homes, new product innovation. I would like to add to our dialogue here a little bit about the timeframes that good, solid forestry management, sustainable forestry management that will get us over time, from the overgrown, highly dense forests subject to wildfire, inhospitable to many endangered species, and just inhospitable and threatened, this habitat in general.

When you work with a forester to create a sustainable forestry plan—let us say in the Sierra Nevada is a good example; it is one we are all familiar with—what kind of timeframes does that forestry plan have to cover?

Mr. MOORE. Are we talking about a land management plan?

Mr. DUARTE. Yes.

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

Mr. DUARTE. If we look at the successful—in privately-owned forests, like Sierra Pacific Industries, they tend to have a lot less forest fires, a lot better habitat quality, a lot better outcomes objectively than some of our public lands do that have been managed differently. Let us talk about best case scenario.

Mr. MOORE. So that is two different questions. I will start with the first one. In terms of how long it takes to do, we do forest plans, the states do the forest action plans. So, in terms of the Forest Service, we have abbreviated the time it takes to do a plan, so it is 3 years now, whereas it used to be about 7, 8 years to do a plan revision. So the Sierra Nevadas—and whether you look at the Sierra or the Sequoia National Forest there, we had completed that plan within the 3 year timeframe—

Mr. DUARTE. I am sorry, I am not discussing the amount of time it takes to get the plan through. I am talking about, is that a 20 year plan, a 50 year plan?

Mr. MOORE. It is about a 15 year plan, sir.

Mr. DUARTE. Fifteen year plan? And that is the horizon that private companies would work on with the Forest—a forestry management plan that they would log, they would make some money, they would sell products, they would fulfill whatever regulatory obligations they have?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Well, the plans are much broader than that. That is only one component within the forest plans.

Mr. DUARTE. Okay. So do the regulations, the endangered species requirements, do they stay static over that period of time, or is an investment likely to be made, then the rules change?

Mr. MOORE. No, the ESA, the Endangered Species Act, that stays the same until Congress decides to change it. But there are no changes in that from plan to plan, if the change is not made at a Congressional level.

Mr. DUARTE. Congress may not change the Endangered Species Act, but a new lawsuit may surface? The *Cottonwood* ruling obviously has major implications for what happens with that forestry management plan within that 15 year timeframe. If someone discovers another creature, or another creature gets classified as threatened or endangered, that could threaten the investment, threaten the plan, and have it go back to the 3 to 7 year process we are discussing?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. Well, if you take the *Cottonwood* as an example, what could potentially be at risk is about 87 forest plans. And so you would have to—they would potentially be at risk of litigation. And, it depends on the litigation, the type of litigation, and what it would require us to do, in terms of revising the plans, or amending the plans.

Mr. DUARTE. So if anyone wants to capitalize on new product innovation, build new facilities, purchase forest land to rehabilitate and get it back to a healthy, sustainable forest environment, we are talking tens of millions of acres, right, just in the Sierra Nevada? We are talking about a lot of land that any government program is not going to be able to accomplish the rehabilitation of? It is going to take private investors making a nickel here and there off innovative products, finding the employees, getting these communities back on their feet, instead of them—instead of letting them just burn and kind of go away? But these long-term investments are challenged because the rules could change at any minute, anytime during that operation.

Mr. MOORE. So a lot has happened over the last 20 years, and the Forest Service's budget has steadily declined over the last 20 years, up until the bipartisan infrastructure legislation and IRA, the Inflation Reduction Act, monies. And so what we have been doing over the last 20 years is trying to add capacity by creating partnerships with different entities, whether that was Tribes, states, counties, to do a lot of this work, other Federal agencies, other state agencies.

Mr. DUARTE. I am sorry, but a lot of this work used to get done by logging companies, and grazing families that ran cattle that managed fuels through moneymaking activities that provided tax base, and jobs, and private-sector activity. That has been displaced greatly somewhat by Federal programs that get it some money—and maybe more money or less money, but never enough money to tackle the size of the job.

And instead what we have is an uninvestable situation where the forests are overgrown, the rules are constantly changing, the communities are being lost in terms of housing, employment, anybody who would even want to live there, and the business models—for all the new products we may come up with the business models for investment just aren't there.

The CHAIRMAN. You have to—we need to bring it home, Mr. Duarte. We can do a second round of questions, since we are whistling through this Committee so efficiently here today.

Mr. DUARTE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. So—okay. So save that thought, okay? Mr. Vasquez, let me recognize you for 5 minutes. Thank you.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, thank you, Ranking Member, and thank you, Chief Moore, for being here today. Today we are experiencing another historic fire near Las Cruces, New Mexico, the Las Cruces Fire.

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

Mr. VASQUEZ. I represent the Second District, home to the beautiful Lincoln, Gila, Cibola, and Coronado National Forests, four of six of New Mexico's National Forests. And as we enter wildfire sea-

son once again, it is imperative that my constituents and our National Forests are protected.

Chief, you alluded to this earlier, but the Calf Canyon and Hermit's Peak Fire, one of the largest in state history, in fact, combined with the Black Fire in my district, in the Gila, over 700,000 acres, are the two largest fires in our state's history. And tragically, the Calf Canyon-Hermit's Peak Fire, as you know, was caused by the U.S. Forest Service through a prescribed burn. Now, this has caused a lot of distrust in the Federal Government, particularly in our Hispanic land-grant communities in the north, and our ability to trust the Federal Government to manage fire and forests in our state. We have to change that.

Now, Chief, I sent you a letter on March 1st,² asking for a response, along with Representative Teresa Leger Fernandez, who represents the Third District in New Mexico, and asking specifically what changes to your prescribed burn program were going to take place after displacing more than 400 New Mexicans from their homes, and causing one of the largest wildfires in New Mexico's history. I have yet to hear from your agency, have yet to have a response on that.

Now, you have mentioned earlier that .16 percent of a chance that a prescribed fire goes in a way that you would not like it to go. For us, that .16 percent means the loss of homes, of tradition, of culture, of grazing allotments, and so much more, so I would argue that there is no room for error in your prescribed burn program. Chief Moore, I would like to have, perhaps submitted for the record, but also here in this Committee, an answer to that question. How has the Forest Service changed its prescribed burn program since that Hermit's Peak and Calf Canyon Fire?

Mr. MOORE. So I will give you the response, and I will follow up with you on some very specifics—what we are planning to do with that. But in general, we are looking at making sure that, before any fire starts, that it has the latest technology. Also having real time decision-making ability. In the past, when you look at burn plans, for an example, it could be based on information that was made a week ago. Now we are requiring them to make decisions on the day of the burn so that you have the latest information.

Also looking at things like portable weather stations, relevant—looking at large weather stations that covers a large area. And also using local knowledge. What we recognize is that people that are local in those communities understand the winds, they understand how fire behaves when it hits the landscape, and so now we are incorporating local knowledge into the decisions that we make, which we had not to the degree that we needed to in the past.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, Chief, and I agree that local knowledge is incredibly important. In fact, the constituents in my state I have spoken to have all said the Forest Service had to be crazy to have a prescribed burn on that particular day. And that is very disappointing, because, as I mentioned before, more than 400 New Mexicans lost everything, including their homes.

Now we are facing the next phase of this tragedy, which is the compensation from FEMA. And investigation from ProPublica and

² **Editor's note:** the letter referred to is located on p. 41.

Source New Mexico found that of the 140 households eligible for FEMA housing, only 13 had been awarded. That is after 400 days of this fire. Chief, do you agree that this is an unacceptable result following a catastrophic fire caused by the Federal Government?³

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, I am not familiar with the data that you have just talked about, but I am interested—always interested in working with you. That seems like that is a FEMA question that you asked, but—

Mr. VASQUEZ. Well, Chief, let me stop you there, and I am glad that you said that, because this is where the disconnect comes from, and this is where I believe the distrust from constituents in New Mexico comes from. There is a disconnect here between Federal agencies. If one Federal agency causes a catastrophic fire that causes 400 people to lose their home and says now it is FEMA's problem, then people, rightfully so, are not going to have a trust in government. So how can the Forest Service work more closely with FEMA, which to this day has not awarded a single dollar, 400 days after this fire, to ensure that a problem caused by the Federal Government is fixed by the Federal Government? I understand it is not your jurisdiction, but how would you respond to those concerns?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I respond by saying I understand the frustration in how different agencies within the Federal Government operate. I would also ask you to be understanding of I don't know what FEMA's rules are, since I don't work for them, and that is not a put-off. I simply don't know what FEMA's rules are. But I will follow up and provide you with a response. And in terms of your letter that you sent in March, I will look that up and make sure we are responsive to you.

[The information referred to is located on p. 43.]

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, Chief, I appreciate that. And my constituents are looking for answers, and if I go to another subcommittee and ask FEMA the same thing, they are going to say, well, it was the Forest Service's fault. So, as you can understand, there is some real frustration here, and I expect to hear a response from you soon. Thank you, Chief.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mr. Vasquez. Our hearts go out to you and your constituents down there in that tragic situation that, there is a really strong tension between the great need for more prescribed burns, yet the ability to trust it happening in your backyard under the right conditions. Local knowledge, we need to follow up on that more too, because that is something that would have been extremely helpful in fighting fires that I have had in my neighborhood as well, so I look forward to working with you on that too.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Thank you, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. I will now recognize Mrs. DeRemer—

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. It is okay.

The CHAIRMAN. I am going to screw it up.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. It is kind of a long name, it is okay.

³ Editor's note: the information referred to is located on p. 42.

The CHAIRMAN. I know better.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Well, thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Mrs. Chavez-DeRemer. Thank you.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I was really appreciating my colleague, Mr. Duarte's, line of questioning, so if I do have time, I wouldn't mind yielding back to some further questions that way, but you offered a round two, these are going to be specific, Chief Moore, to Oregon. In your testimony you discussed your staff's work with Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians on a Tribal Forest Protection Act (Pub. L. 108-278) proposal and self-determination (Pub. L. 93-638) agreement. This agreement's goal is to reduce hazardous fuels on National Forest System lands that border Tribal lands and private property.

I do appreciate this vital partnership to reduce wildfire risk, but it is clear we really do need to do more. I would like to hear from you on what challenges the Forest Service still faces in successfully treating both Federal and non-Federal lands over the next 10 years. And, follow up to that, how exactly Congress can help you address these barriers?

Mr. MOORE. So thank you for the question, Congresswoman. I think we are beginning to make a lot of progress working across boundaries. As a matter of fact, no matter which state you go in, whether it is Oregon, or whether it is any other state, what you will find is that we have all agreed on one thing, and that is we are working across boundaries if we are going to make a difference. And that goes back to the all-lands, all-hands approach to try and address some of these significant issues that we have on the landscape. So whether you are talking about tornado damage, hurricane, disease and insects, or fire, we would not be successful if we don't work together and across jurisdictional boundaries.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. So a follow-up to that, then, what impact can we expect to see from projects using the Tribal Forest Protection Act and the Good Neighbor Agreements, is one, and then will it have an impact on timber volume sold over the long-term?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I believe so, and I will use a couple of examples. If I look at the Good Neighbor Authorities that we have in Wisconsin—now, we are looking at about 25 to 35 million board-feet of timber working with them, so that is an increase. When I look at working with the Tribes, we are also working in ways that they are providing a sustainable flow of wood as well through the GNA.

Now, the Tribes are not using that as much as the states, primarily because they can't keep the receipts the same as the states, same as with counties. The counties and the Tribes are in the same boat, and I believe that is something in consideration now in the new farm bill, is to include the Tribes and the counties, and treat them the same as we do states, in terms of keeping the receipts to use them.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. I will just do a quick follow-up—well, actually, changing direction a little bit, climate resilience. In the agency's current advance notice of proposed rulemaking on climate resilience, it states that currently the Forest Service commercially harvests $\frac{1}{10}$ of 1 percent of acres within the National Forest System each year, while noting an increase in disturbances driven primarily by overstocked forests that are susceptible to insects, dis-

ease, and wildfire, which you have touched on. Can you explain to me how the Forest Service harvests so little from the National Forest System lands, yet you mention overstocked forests as the primary driver of disturbance? And a follow-up to that is do you consider harvesting timber to be a climate-smart forestry practice?

Mr. MOORE. So last question first, okay?

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Okay.

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I think forestry, and the science behind forestry, would say that, and the way it is used, it is certainly climate-smart. In terms of your previous question, for context, we have 193 million acres of National Forest System lands in this country. A lot of that land is not set aside for timber harvesting, so you are not going to be harvesting those lands. For instance, wilderness areas are set aside. We have grasslands set aside. If you look at some of the hazardous fuel reduction work that we are doing now, there are not commercial timber opportunities there.

The reason I say that is because we have to broaden the discussion significantly. We have to talk about wood innovations. We have to diversify the infrastructure in the industry so that it utilizes the material that we have, which will sustain, and even create, more jobs, particularly in our small rural communities. The traditional infrastructure that we have is looking at commercial timber, and we will always need that, but we have so much other material out there, small-diameter, low-value material that I think we have the opportunity, with innovations, to create additional jobs to diversify the whole infrastructure that we have in this country. So I want to do that. You have steep slopes that you cannot harvest off of. I mentioned grasslands, wilderness areas. We have certain areas that is not allowed on that. So when you take away all of that land, that percentage that we are harvesting is going to be higher.

But now I am also the—I will be the first to tell you that we are not taking nearly enough vegetation off the landscape, and it is creating a hazardous condition out there for us, and we need to be able to do much more than that. I can give you an example. You didn't ask for it. Chairman, do we have time? So let me take the last couple of decades, and if I use 2020 as kind of a benchmark, we sold about 1.9 billion board-feet of timber at the time. And by 2021, that 1.9 billion had jumped to 2.5 billion board-feet that we sold. In the last 5 years, on average, we have sold about 3 billion board-feet.

Now, with the bipartisan infrastructure legislation, we are looking to increase that up to about 4 billion board-feet, and that is on a sustainable level that we are planning to do, and a lot of that takes into consideration new innovations that we have in wood that is going to help us get there. It also includes monies being spent on the bipartisan infrastructure legislation to upgrade existing wood facilities, like wood mills, logging mills, retrofit them, and try to stabilize that infrastructure that we have. And so we are planning to do all of these things over time to increase the amount of vegetation we take off the landscape, because we know that it is critical that we do, but also create new jobs, particularly for our small rural communities.

Mrs. CHAVEZ-DEREMER. Thank you, Chief Moore. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, my time has expired.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Mrs. Chavez-DeRemer. I will recognize myself for 5 minutes.

Chief Moore, how many board-feet are growing on our 193 million acres of Forest Service land per year?

Mr. MOORE. I don't have that answer. I can get that to you, Congressman.

The CHAIRMAN. You don't know how many new board-feet grow per year on the—

Mr. MOORE. Well, I don't know how the question is being asked. For example—

The CHAIRMAN. Well, you said you have increased the harvest to about 4 billion board-feet per year. I just wonder at what pace or scale, so to speak, are we keeping up with new growth?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I want to make sure that we have the right context, Congressman, because you can't just look categorically across 193 million acres and say that you have this much growth when that much growth is not really available to even be considered for harvesting.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, that is where I am going to go with my next question there. So would you say that the number of board-feet growing is exceeding the amount of harvest by many fold, or what do you think?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, we are clearly not removing the amount of timber out there that we could be or should be, and most of it is budget driven, sir.

The CHAIRMAN. Most of it is what?

Mr. MOORE. Most of that is budget driven.

The CHAIRMAN. Budget driven? We are not giving you enough money here in Congress?

Mr. MOORE. Well, not to the degree that we need to be managing our forests. I think that BIL and IRA has given us a significant boost in increasing that opportunity, and now we just—if it is a one-time fix, then it is going to be good on a temporary basis.

The CHAIRMAN. How much is the Service spending on innovating wood products to be used by private industry for making new products, new things? And you mentioned concrete, and other areas.

Mr. MOORE. Well, we have about \$1.8 billion between the two bills to look at opportunities like that, and—

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. So is it appropriate that the Forest Service is devising new ways to use wood, or should that come with the private-sector, that they would be creating markets, so to speak?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, we are working with the private-sector, and other entities, including universities, to—

The CHAIRMAN. No, but I guess my question is, is that really your role, innovating new products, or is that something that is going to come from the big thinkers you have all across the country that are constantly creating new products? So I will leave that question aside here. So if we have money for that, how much did you spend on at least two occasions of shooting cattle in New Mexico?

Mr. MOORE. I can provide you—

The CHAIRMAN. Eradicating cattle?

Mr. MOORE. I can provide you with the budget that we set aside for that.

[The information referred to is located on p. 44.]

The CHAIRMAN. You can provide that? Now how is that a mission of the Forest Service, killing wild cattle in the—I think the Gila River area?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I think if you look at our rationale for removing the cattle, they were wild cattle, and it—becoming a safety issue for our public that were visiting there.

The CHAIRMAN. People visiting those rugged areas where the cattle are, that the cowboys—

Mr. MOORE. Congressman—

The CHAIRMAN.—I am told cowboys can't root them out of there doing cowboy work, but people are in there?

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, cattle moves around—

The CHAIRMAN. Yes, they do.

Mr. MOORE.—and they were moving around where we had public visiting, and it became—

The CHAIRMAN. So hiring helicopters—

Mr. MOORE.—a safety hazard—

The CHAIRMAN.—and hiring hunters to shoot cattle in New Mexico was a priority for the Forest Service over new uses of wood, or over prescribed burns, and all these other things?

Mr. MOORE. Well, Congressman, we have a variety of issues and concerns that we have on our National Forests, and we can't afford just to focus on one or two concerns. We have to address all the concerns that come in, to the best of our ability.

The CHAIRMAN. Sure, sure. That seemed—especially when you are asked by Members of Congress after the first time.

Mr. MOORE. We have also been asked by Members of Congress to continue.

The CHAIRMAN. Shooting cattle? Okay. Let us shift back over to the fire retardant. Mr. Moore from Alabama was talking about that. So what I hear is that the backup plan, if the tool is taken away by a court via lawsuit, is water. The backup plan is using water to drop from aircraft, instead of the retardant, and its properties of sticking to foliage or wherever is targeted. That is—is that what you said?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I said we don't have any alternatives, other than water, if we cannot use retardant.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. So tell us on the Committee, how effective will that be? Since my information on that is that water dropped from these distances, especially in a hot situation, in a hot fire, tends to evaporate before it even hits the target. How effective is that going to be?

Mr. MOORE. Well, it wouldn't be effective at all, and I am not suggesting that we use water. But that would be the alternative that we would have to make an attempt to—

The CHAIRMAN. So this underlines what a grave situation we have if the retardant is taken away, right?

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay.

Mr. MOORE. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. So why did the Forest Service choose to oppose my legislation to ensure that retardant is kept while this 2 to 3 year period of EPA looking at it, a 30 year long used product—why did they oppose my legislation?

Mr. MOORE. I don't know that we opposed it, Congressman, as much as we would like to work with you on pieces of that legislation to address.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, they had—they took an opposition on it in our previous hearing.

Mr. MOORE. Yes. But we also—there is—the intent of that bill we understand, and we would be interested in working with you on making the bill more supportable.

The CHAIRMAN. So with 2 years to possibly get the permit, as you said yourself, in the interim there is no alternative, other than no retardant, and maybe use water?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I did say that. Yes.

The CHAIRMAN. Okay. All right. I have burned through these 5 minutes, so I will come back and recognize our Ranking Member, Ms. Salinas.

Ms. SALINAS. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Chief Moore, in the Inflation Reduction Act Congress provided \$5 billion to support forest management, planning, and restoration activities for Federal, as well as non-Federal, forests. Can you provide us with some information on this investment, and how has this additional funding been put to good use, and what successes have we seen?

Mr. MOORE. So on the \$5 billion, what we had to do was build the structure for success. Initially we set aside ten landscapes that we want to focus on, and these landscapes consist of about 250,000 acres apiece. Since then, this year, we have added an additional 11 landscapes, which we now have 21 landscapes, and of the 21 landscapes, it consists of about 20 million acres within those landscapes. And when we looked at the landscapes themselves, they were about 250,000 acres apiece. And so what the wildfire crisis strategy is doing is addressing 31 of those—131 of those landscapes through funding of different types, whether that is Inflation Reduction Act funding or bipartisan infrastructure legislation funding. And so that is our plan going forward with—we are trying to address the problems we have, and particularly out West.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. So development of new forest products enables us to build in a climate-friendly manner, and can help support rural economies. Can you speak to how the Wood Innovation Grant Program is working, since it has been statutorily authorized in the 2018 Farm Bill and funding was increased in the Inflation Reduction Act? What promising products have received grants, and where do you see the future of forest product research and innovation?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, I think we are having a lot of huge success right now with wood innovations, and I mentioned earlier the cross-laminated timber, CLT. We now have 16 buildings that are being built with this, and we are looking for that to triple at the end of the year. Working with WoodWorks and WoodWorks is helping us to strategize and plan for different ways to look at wood innovations for use. When I look at biochar as an opportunity for mine land reclamation or farming, looking at it as a potential—par-

ticular potential opportunity for carbon credits, I look at biofuel as another opportunity. Using even biomass as an opportunity for energy—wood energy to be created.

I think nanocellulose material is what I had mentioned earlier. It is a product used to strengthen material. I think that we are looking at a lot of different opportunities on how to use wood differently so we would have a much better chance of removing much more of the vegetation out of our forests that is contributing to wildfire, but also disease and insects, and just the whole changes in the climate that we are experiencing.

Ms. SALINAS. And then just to follow up on Congresswoman Pingree's questioning a little bit, what are we doing specifically to encourage commercial usage of some of these new wood innovation products?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. So we are working with—we have a Forest Product Laboratory located in Madison, Wisconsin, and they are working directly with corporations and others on utilizing both the material that the lab is helping produce, but also in how the lab is working with other university scientists in creating some of these innovations out of wood.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. So, as you are well aware, climate change is having a real impact on forests and forested communities across our nation. Can you speak to how state and private forestry programs, like the Forest Health Protection Program, help landowners ensure that their forests will remain productive and provide resource benefits, both environmental and economic, into the future?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. The Agroforestry Center is one of the examples that we have that can work directly with private landowners, whether it is farmers or wood growers in the country. And it is a great opportunity to put in one location both education, as well as the technical components of an agroforestry center. But, more importantly, it gives the end-user, whether that is a farmer or a wood grower, the ability to implement some of the technologies that are coming through the Agroforestry Center.

And so far, it is working really well. I think that is an area where there is going to be a tremendous amount of additional growth there, and I think the things that we are discovering are things that are going to lead us further into this uncertain future that we have around wood.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you, and I yield back, Mr. Chairman.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. I will recognize Mr. Duarte now for 5 minutes.

Mr. DUARTE. Thank you, Chief. Thank you—I mean Chairman, and hello, Chief. Try and keep you straight here. We were having a good discussion—we actually had it in another committee, Natural Resources, a few days ago, so you are in a bit of a circuit here. But if we are talking about—I mean, once we start talking about government budget appropriations to sustain millions and millions of acres of forest that are overgrown, that we don't want to burn uncontrollably, that have some significant habitat, recreation value, and sequester a lot of carbon, which many are concerned with, there is nothing better than a private-sector solution. There is nothing better than somebody making a buck grazing it, logging

it, innovative wood products, and the more we move that to the private-sector, the better.

Please tell me—you can have your choice. You can either tell me what the prerequisites are, as you see it, the major prerequisites for successful commercial logging operations to help re-establish these overgrown forest landscapes into sustainable, profitable, productive forest systems, or where are the best models in the U.S. that you have seen, and what can we learn from them?

Mr. MOORE. So I think the collaboratives are one way that we are seeing a lot of creativity in how we get work done. I think the Good Neighbor Authority, working with the states, the Tribes, and—as well as the local community—I think all of that is playing out now, in terms of how we are treating the landscapes out in our National Forests, and those lands adjacent to the National Forests. So I think it is being discovered now. The Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Project is one of those. We have a number of those that are still being funded. And as I mentioned earlier, for every dollar invested in those areas, we are getting about \$1.81 in additional work. And so those are examples of where we are having a lot of successes in trying to work across jurisdictional boundaries, and those are places where we are having a lot of success.

Mr. DUARTE. How many years until we are all caught up?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I don't know how many years before we are all caught up, or if we will ever catch up. I think that we do have a lot of work ahead of us, and I think it is the job of all of us to try to figure out ways forward on that, and we are trying to do that through wood innovations, when you look at what we have, in terms of Federal agency.

Mr. DUARTE. But—wood innovations, I mean, great. We have all seen new products, they are great: particle board, laminates, whatever. But we are importing wood now, right? We have overgrown forests, some of them old growth forests, they have been classified, and managed with more of a hands-off approach than probably what is healthy, that have a lot of commercial—conventional timber sitting out there that are getting more overgrown, when we could get back to economic private-sector logging that doesn't exhaust Federal resources, and probably contributes back to the states, hopefully the Tribes and counties, as you are presenting.

Where—how do we get back to that, so that we can actually get across the landscape, restore our forests, and re-establish thriving rural communities, and the economic system that kind of—hopefully takes care of itself, in most cases?

Mr. MOORE. Yes, Congressman, I really think it is a matter of resources, and I will tell you why. I had mentioned going back to the year 2000, and what we have been able to gradually and steadily increase over time. During that same amount of time, we have lost about 40 percent of our non-fire workforce. And so while we have lost a number of employees that do that very kind of work, productivity has continued to steadily go up. We have done that by a number of things. One is looking at processes, streamlining those processes. One is partnering in a much bigger way to maximize and leverage what we are able to do. And I think if we continue to go in that direction, we will continue to see an increase in what we are able to do.

Mr. DUARTE. But the employees you have lost have been Forest Service employees, correct? The U.S. Forest—

Mr. MOORE. It is a range of people. It has been non-fire workforce.

Mr. DUARTE. Sure. Sure. But what we have lost more so is loggers, timber mills, right? The actual workforce that clears the forest and makes a dollar doing it. Although you have lost staffing, the more critical factor is we are simply not sustaining our forests. We are simply failing to maintain our forests in any semblance—we are going backwards in the last couple decades, rather than forwards, in terms of forest management. Is that true?

Mr. MOORE. Well, I think if you look at one specific piece of it, it is true, another piece, it is not. I mentioned just now how the amount that we are providing—of selling has gone up over the last couple of decades, not gone down.

Mr. DUARTE. But the—you are logging—you are taking more wood out now than you were a decade or 2 ago, but the forests are progressively getting unhealthier, and still becoming more overgrown over time. So we are not—we can—and the Chairman asked you a few moments ago, do we need to double, triple, quadruple, 10x, what order of magnitude do we need to accelerate our boardfeet of lumber being taken out of our National Forest environments to recuperate, and then break even? And—I mean, if you are getting \$40 billion now, or whatever your authorizations are now, what are you going to need to do that with a government program *versus* how do we get successful commercial forestry active again?

Mr. MOORE. Well, Congressman, keep in mind that the endgame is not to try and take as much timber off as we can, because we have Endangered Species Act concerns, we have Clean Water Act concerns. We have certain species that we are trying to protect. We have certain steep slopes that we can't operate on. And so the point that I want to make is that we—we are in a balancing act between—

Mr. DUARTE. But you are not balancing, I am sorry. Endangered Species Act in California, with the spotted owl, has let our forests become overgrown fire hazards, dumping carbon into environment, destroying species for other—destroying habitat for other species. Please tell me, and start with the Sierra Nevadas, where has there been an Endangered Species Act success?

The CHAIRMAN. Mr. Duarte, we are going to have to allow him to finish on this question.

Mr. DUARTE. Sure, okay.

The CHAIRMAN. Briefly finish that question. Or we can—we will go with round three.

Mr. MOORE. So, it is—what I am saying is that we have laws in place, and we have to follow those laws. And when someone challenges the work that we are trying to do based on what they see as damaging to a threatened and endangered species, the law allows us to try and be responsive to that. And sometimes we don't agree, so we end up in court, and having the court settle some of those debates. I think that is where we have been a lot of times, and so we can't just go out and maximize timber removal on these landscapes, because we have seen what they will do in our past.

Mr. DUARTE. Well, to be clear, I am not talking about maximizing timber removal. I am talking about getting the forests into an optimal, sustainable tree density so that it is ideal habitat, as well as a productive forest, an excellent watershed, and not a threat to local communities through excessive fire hazards.

The CHAIRMAN. You will have to talk about that in the next round of questions.

Mr. DUARTE. All right. I will leave it alone. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. I will recognize myself, in keeping with the timeline here, for 5 minutes.

Chief Moore, following up on what Mr. Duarte was speaking about, is that when you say there are ESA concerns, and Clean Water Act concerns, the wildfires we are doing—are direct contributors, more so than any logging project I have ever seen. And we can go back to the bad old days 150 years ago, with clear cutting of hundreds of thousands of acres and things like that, but that hasn't been around for at least since the 1950s or something.

The contribution of wildfire is so much more detrimental to water quality, that washes all this ash and soil down into our brooks, and streams, and rivers, and lakes, and across the highways—Highway 70 is closed half the time up in my area and the species themselves are being burned out. I have been out in the woods where they go out and they have to hoot at owls to see if they are there or not before than can proceed with a project. And maybe that is all good. But, we are going backwards so fast.

As you affirmed a few minutes ago, we are growing more board-feet per day by far than what we are harvesting. It is what Mr. Duarte, he is not saying it either, that we want to go out and cut every tree. It is a situation where we are not nearly keeping up. And so the priorities don't seem to be the emergency focus, and that is what I just don't hear from you over the years, sir, respectfully.

You are a friend, and we have talked a lot, but I don't hear the fire in the gut over doing this thing, okay? And my people are sick of it in the district, and all over the western states. So when we say it is ESA's concerns, and Clean Water Act concerns—these policies are contributing more so to ruining those than anything we could ever do out in the woods in this present day and age.

So when we talk about set-aside acres—let me drill down on that a little bit, wilderness areas and grasslands. Now, when new wilderness areas and grasslands are proposed, is your agency out there chiming in, advocating for them?

Mr. MOORE. I—Congressman, I think this whole discussion is about the laws that we follow that Congress is passing.

The CHAIRMAN. No, but your agency has time to come speak against my bill on just simply keeping fire retardant around for the next 2 or 3 years while it is studied to death, okay? And so—wilderness and grasslands, you just said a bit ago, those set-asides mean you cannot do treatment in there. So is there something magical about these areas that the trees don't grow—they don't overgrow and become fire prone, even though if—there might be a steep hillside, or species there, or a threat—there might—something might get in the waterway? Are these areas—are these set-

asides—do they have some kind of way of self-sustaining that they don't—they are not fire prone?

Mr. MOORE. Congress has approved the wilderness areas. And in that Wilderness Act, it also says that we cannot harvest timber in there. So these are laws that Congress is passing that we are implementing.

The CHAIRMAN. No, the President names them. We don't approve them.

Mr. MOORE. Yes, but we have no choice to—then to follow the law, or even Executive Order—

The CHAIRMAN. No, but do you have the fire in the belly, you and your department, to advocate: do not do these if you want to have the ability for people to go out, and manage, and keep roads open, and not have to study to death replacing a culvert with a 2 year NEPA process to do basic things? I need to hear, besides that you have time to shoot cattle, and advocate against my bill, and things like that, that you are out there with the fire in the belly to say, look, we are falling farther and farther behind every year. Every minute. And the people at home, they just can't understand what is going on, so we need prescribed burns, but in a way that respects what Mr. Vasquez was talking about from New Mexico. We need to be aggressive on that and push back on. Let me ask you about the categorical exclusions here.

Now, we have had these in place since the 2018 Farm Bill. Do you have an idea of how many new fire breaks or fuel breaks had been created—what kind of acreage using these fuel break and emergency authorities to expedite projects so—to have basic fuel breaks around communities?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. So the linear fuel break CEs, so far we have approved eight. We have about another 20+ that are in the pipeline to be approved as well.

The CHAIRMAN. How many acres are authorized that are used—

Mr. MOORE. I think so far it is about 20,000 acres, but I don't know how many are tied into the other ones that is in the pipeline yet.

The CHAIRMAN. 20,000? And so, in round numbers, you govern 200 million acres? 193 million?

Mr. MOORE. 193 million.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Okay. The Dixie Fire burned a million acres, and devoured one of, well, two of my towns, really and core parts of others. So 20,000 acres over several years—how do you think we are ever going to catch up on that? I mean, we give you the tools, and we want you to spend time using these tools to the greatest extent possible, but instead—cross-laminated timber is something I have seen in existence. Just about every church I have been into, the—they are made out of laminated timber in the sanctuary. So what is new in the area of laminated timber that we need the Forest Service to innovate new products, instead of being out on the ground, doing this basic work, and not encouraging the private-sector, as Mr. Duarte was talking about?

I have information here that says we have six uses of the authority in that categorical exclusion. You say we are now up to eight,

and we have 20 in the works, so that would probably be a total of 40,000 acres by the time all is said and done, right?

Mr. MOORE. I don't know yet.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. Okay. Sir—and I am really trying—I respect you, and the position you are in, and how hard it is with—you are inviting—fighting environmental lawsuits all the time, and you say you need more resources, but when we are talking about the inability, it seems, to increase pace and scale, the thing—the one thing we need most desperately, it just—it just—starts to fall on more and more deaf ears around here, you know what I am saying? It hurts us in our districts. It hurts us to keep feeling this frustration that the government is not going to get the job done for us.

Mr. Duarte was talking about—we need much more private-sector work. We need your commitment from your department that, if we build a mill for \$200 million, that they are going to have a 30 year supply, that the *Cottonwood* case is not going to come in and say we have to revisit a species here that decided to show up, or decided to be recategorized. We need a commitment to that, because there is no way in the world that we could ever fund you enough at the pace and scale with which the Department moves to get anything done in a way that is going to be meaningful.

So I will pause there. Does my Ranking Member have a further question?

Ms. SALINAS. I do. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So, as we have talked about, climate change is having a real impact on water supply of agricultural communities across the nation, and certainly in the Pacific Northwest, in my region. Healthier watersheds provide more water for downstream users. Chief Moore, can you provide insight into the watershed condition framework implementation?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. So there are a lot of different ways of looking at that, Congresswoman, and right now we are focused on fireheds, to look at getting at the fire issue. And, of course, they can sit within a watershed. One of our biggest challenges has been to report on outputs on an acre. For instance, we go into a watershed, and we treat so many acres of that watershed to move it from one condition class to the next condition class. And I don't know if it is time for us to consider outcome-based reporting, rather than output-based reporting. Looking at the outcome-based reporting would allow us to take a number of different actions within a watershed, or even within a fireshed, to improve the condition of that fireshed or watershed.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. And then can you provide an example of a priority watershed where desired outcomes have been achieved?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. I think if you look at a municipal watershed, as an example—and we have been putting some of our GNA authority and work in those municipal watersheds, because they serve the communities in the area there, so that would be a priority watershed, as an example.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. So, as you know, economic pressure, such as that from suburban development, put forestland owners under pressure to sell their land. Can you speak to how effective the Forest Legacy Program is in helping landowners to preserve ownership through the use of easements?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. I think that has been one of the real successful program areas. And, we have seen on occasion where, depending on the location across the country, the original owner of the land—it is getting to the point that they can't farm or ranch, and they look at turning it over to their offspring, their kids. The kids are not interested in that work, and so now it is not a working farm, or a working ranch, but you still have to pay taxes on it. And so what we are finding is, to keep land open, we are—the Legacy Program is one of those great successes over the years, would allow the owner to have some income, but also to keep the land—in exchange for keeping the land open.

Ms. SALINAS. And, to follow up, is the program effective in reducing fragmentation of forest lands?

Mr. MOORE. Yes. I think it is one of our successes.

Ms. SALINAS. Great. And are there any adjustments that should be made to make these programs easier for users?

Mr. MOORE. So I would like to think about that, because I have heard some discussion from some of the staffs, Congresswoman, and get back with you on that.

Ms. SALINAS. Thank you. No further questions. I yield back.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you. Chief Moore, when we are talking about the situation with old growth, and protection of that, we had a very positive, productive discussion in Natural Resources the other day on what Speaker McCarthy brought forward, with the protecting of the giant sequoias in California. And—but also the acknowledgement that lack of management near them has endangered them, and indeed we lost some areas of that in the past in yet another fire wave through the area. So we have to do better it—just on that.

But that said, as the agency contemplates more work on old growth and mature forests, as we are calling them, is the agency now going to have to split between direct fire suppression of—maybe around communities, buoys, or is it going to shift more resources to protect old growth?

Mr. MOORE. Well, what I am finding is that there has been an explosion of homes being built into the wildland-urban interface, so that question is becoming fuzzier. Protecting the giant sequoias, as an example, there is a lot of work there, and those are iconic trees that are thousands of years old. So looking at some of the emergency authorities we have to protect those trees has been really great for us, as a country, not just an agency.

And I will give you an example. The work that we have done out there to date—we have about 7,000 piles of material out there. We have burned probably 2,000—little over 2,000 piles of material out there, and we are on schedule to burn the other 5,000 or so piles. The reason I have talked so much about wood innovation is because if we had wood innovation refined, rather than burning 7,000 piles of slash from creating health and resiliency in our forests, we could create products and jobs out of that material.

The CHAIRMAN. Well, sir, we are importing lumber, so I don't know if we have a lack of market for wood products in the country, and it is—we have plenty of regulations to prevent the harvest, and plenty of regulations to make it difficult to truck them, and have trucks that are available, or even home building, I suppose.

So let us shift over a little more on—UC Berkeley in California, they actually have a productive division in their Forest Department that they have research that shows that southern Cal, for example, southern California, has lost half of its mature forests to fire, insect, and disease in just the last 10 years. So the authors at UC Berkeley concluded that there is a hands-off approach, which is increasingly failing to preserve mature forests, and that, in quotes again, “management actions should be taken, despite uncertainties, if cost of inaction is high.” *Uncertainties* probably meaning the usual litany of lawsuits, what is it going to do to the species here and there, what have you.

So when we are talking about wilderness areas, and grasslands, and monuments that have a hands-off, stay out approach, wouldn't the Berkeley work suggest that, instead of this off-limit approach, that they should be aggressively managed, or at least just catch up, whether we are talking the giant sequoias, or any other highly valued old growth or mature land?

Mr. MOORE. Congressman, I think we all agree that the National Forests need more management conducted on them, so that is not debatable. That is something that we all agree on. What we are trying to decide is how do we utilize the type of material that we have out there in removing that vegetation.

The CHAIRMAN. I am sorry, I missed the last part.

Mr. MOORE. Yes. No problem. I said we all agree that we need to do more work out there. I said the discussion has really been over how to utilize the type of material that we are removing off the landscape.

The CHAIRMAN. Yes. I think there is a market for it; but, we are talking a few dollars for that *versus* a lot more dollars to do the other part. So—well, I am going to conclude my line of questioning, as I have another committee beckoning as well, Ranking Member, do you have any closing thoughts before we close out?

Ms. SALINAS. Just quickly, Mr. Chairman, thank you. I want to thank Chief Moore for providing us your valuable insight into the work, the challenges, obviously the tensions and opportunities across our forestry programs, and your thoughts on really how to improve some of these programs. The information and insight that you have shared with us today will enable us to develop policies that will help improve programs to deliver results for forest health, rural economies, and help us fight climate change. And I do think it is a balance and a tension that we are facing right now; but, we have to address these associated fire risks, disease, and insect infestation. I think you have given us a lot to think about, so thank you for your time today.

Mr. MOORE. Thank you.

The CHAIRMAN. Thank you, Ranking Member, and the rest of our Committee Members that could join us and be part for a portion, or a good part of the hearing today. It is much appreciated. Extremely important topic, obviously. And, Chief Moore, I appreciate, again, you spending time with us over here on the Hill, and working with us, but I just have to say that we need more fire in the belly, sir. We need more passion about this, because we can't keep doing the bureaucratic shuffle on this and think we are going to

have our western lands somehow look anything like they are intended to or used to. And I am just disappointed.

So, sir, let us keep finding ways, and aggressively move at the pace and scale that is going to prevent my district, and others like it, from continuing to lose more towns, lose more habitat, and have our lakes filled with ash, and mud, and such. So, with that, we will conclude today's hearing. Thank you all.

[Whereupon, at 12:00 p.m., the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

SUBMITTED LETTER BY HON. GABE VASQUEZ, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM
NEW MEXICO

March 1, 2023

RANDY MOORE,
Chief,
U.S. Forest Service,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chief Moore,

We write to inquire about the preventative measures the United States Forest Service (USFS) is undertaking for the controlled burns planned for our National Forests. It is imperative that our constituents and our lands are protected from the next wildfire disaster because our constituents cannot afford to have another unprepared wildfire response.

Controlled burns are fires set intentionally for the purpose of reducing potentially hazardous fuels, helping endangered species recover, returning nutrients to the soil, and generally mitigating wildfire risk in the future. Fires can be set over large tracts of land or in pile burns, debris and branches that are stacked and burned after they dry out. These actions can be particularly helpful in preserving our forests under the correct conditions but can be disastrous if those conditions are not met.

Last summer, the Forest Service admitted to causing two wildfires that would eventually merge into the largest fire in New Mexico's history, burning nearly 350,000 acres of land and destroying over 900 buildings. The fire at Calf Canyon was the result of a prescribed pile burn that later reignited and merged with the Hermit's Peak fire, an approved prescribed fire with a burn plan outlined by USFS. A disaster of this proportion cannot happen again.

We understand that the effects of climate change heighten the impact of wildfires on forests across the country, and that most prescribed burns are completed without issue. To help restore trust in preventative measures and ensure the safety of our constituents, we request answers to the following:

- How are prescribed burn notices to local governments and adjacent landowners being communicated to ensure our constituents receive timely notices of fires?
- Has protocol been modified regarding burn piles to prevent smoldering fires from reigniting?
- What measures is your agency taking to ensure fires remain contained?

We look forward to your response on this matter and ensuring New Mexicans are safe and prepared for the next wildfire.

Sincerely,



Hon. GABE VASQUEZ,
Member of Congress



Hon. TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ,
Member of Congress

SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL SUBMITTED BY RANDY MOORE, CHIEF, U.S. FOREST
SERVICE, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Mr. THOMPSON. So, if I may, because I am running out of time here, if you wouldn't mind following up in writing, in terms of the whole question about how well we are doing towards that sustainable growth rate as an overall system, and then my follow-up question would be—I know that you all are doing great things, I follow closely our Forest Service lab professionals, they do a great job. The question I have, though, is it seems like we have been in a whole talking pattern about that, and that is only going to work when we can get it to commercialization. When we get that—all the great things you talked about, and probably more that we can talk about in the future—when we get that to commercialization, then we actually have a vehicle to improve forest health.

The highest priority for the agency is addressing the wildfire crisis. In addition to addressing the wildfire crisis, building resilient forests in the face of climate

change is also a high priority. A robust timber industry is critical to meeting on-the-ground outcomes, as it relates to the thinning of densely vegetated forests in fire-prone landscapes. The Forest Service continues to work diligently to increase the level of timber volume sold by prioritizing staff and other resources, striving for efficiency gains, and updating our NEPA compliance guidance and other practices. Despite the much-needed investments made through both the IJA and IRA, we are still seeing workforce capacity as one of our major issues. We hope that in the coming months, we can begin to increase our workforce capacity in the areas affecting our forest management program, giving us an opportunity to not only maintain our timber sales accomplishments but also increase them.

The Forest Service is uniquely suited, and works actively, to not only innovate through research and development, but also to facilitate technology transfer to industries for commercial application that generates economic development and improves forest health through utilization of small-diameter material from hazardous fuels and forest health projects. As one example, through implementation of farm bill authority, our Forest Products Lab partners with the wood products industry, conservation organizations and universities to analyze the safety of tall wood building materials and increase the use of mass timber in buildings. The Forest Products Lab developed analyses covering all the stages of the life cycle of wood-based products and uses. Over the last 3 years, the Lab supported the commercialization and transfer of research technology through the Wood Products Council. The Lab also provided technical and financial support to the National Hazard Engineering Research Infrastructure (NHERI) TallWood project to support the use of mass timber in multi-story structures located in high seismic zones. The primary contractor for the world's tallest timber hybrid building, Ascent, located in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, contacted the Lab to research and develop an extended, 3 hour, char rate model. This study led to the acceptance by building officials and the 2021 International Building Code that now allows mass timber building up to 18 stories. The Forest Products Lab also supports implementation of the Wood Innovations Act through agreements with universities to conduct research on innovative wood products for building construction. The Forest Products Lab currently has 78 agreements with 36 Universities and organizations.

The farm bill has catalyzed U.S. growth in mass timber construction with over 1,600 buildings built, under construction, or in design, and the rate is accelerating each year. Utilizing Section 8643 of the 2018 Farm Bill, the agency's Wood Innovations Grants Program stimulates and expands wood products and wood energy markets. National focus areas include mass timber, renewable wood energy, and technological development that supports fuel reduction and sustainable forest management. Section 8643 of the 2018 Farm Bill allows the Forest Service to make grants to individuals or public or private entities or a state, local or Tribal government for the purpose of advancing the use of innovative wood products, reducing the use of fossil fuels, and expanding the use of forest residues through conversion of facilities to wood energy. Wood innovation projects are resulting in new and expanded markets for wood products and wood energy including mass timber construction, engineered wood products, biochar and combined heat and power energy projects. With 11 new mass timber panel plants now in the United States, the Forest Service is working with partners to triple the number of buildings built every year from mass timber. Our partnership and funding for WoodWorks has been crucial in achieving these results.

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Mr. VASQUEZ. . . .

Now we are facing the next phase of this tragedy, which is the compensation from FEMA. And investigation from ProPublica and Source New Mexico found that of the 140 households eligible for FEMA housing, only 13 had been awarded. That is after 400 days of this fire. Chief, do you agree that this is an unacceptable result following a catastrophic fire caused by the Federal Government?

I want to acknowledge the extraordinary impacts these events have had on the people and communities in New Mexico and apologize that we are very sorry for what happened with Hermit's Peak. We know that it had tragic impacts on that community, the people's lives and livelihoods, including some of our employees who live in these communities. We have allocated significant post-fire and disaster funding to this area. We are also working with the community and landowners to help them access other USDA programs. A long-term recovery plan has only been possible because of the critical leadership and partnerships with state, local and Federal agencies, local community groups, and academic institutions in coordinated lines of effort.

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Mr. MOORE. Well, I respond by saying I understand the frustration in how different agencies within the Federal Government operate. I would also ask you to be understanding of I don't know what FEMA's rules are, since I don't work for them, and that is not a put-off. I simply don't know what FEMA's rules are. But I will follow up and provide you with a response. And in terms of your letter that you sent in March, I will look that up and make sure we are responsive to you.

The agency is grateful for the resources provided by the Hermit's Peak Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act and funding FEMA for speedy payment of claims to affected members of the community. The impacts on community members go beyond what money can replace. Still, the hope is the expedited claims process will help community members recover, restore, and rebuild. The Forest Service is working with the State of New Mexico and FEMA as part of the long-term recovery plan, addressing recovery across all lands affected by FY22 fires. The Plan is organized under seven "Lines of Effort" (LOEs), which include: community outreach, economic recovery, housing recovery, health, and social services, historical/cultural resources, drinking water, and watershed mitigation. The LOE structure is defined based on "key recovery priorities" for the State of New Mexico's recovery strategy.

- The multi-agency coordination effort recognizes long-term needs related to watershed restoration, infrastructure protection, and other recovery efforts and that long-term efforts will continue to be coordinated by agencies within their authority and funding.
- The Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) program funded \$7.3 million for emergency stabilization in the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire burned area. The BAER treatments included aerial mulching on 3,000 acres, storm-proofing and repairing roads, trail work, and installing road closure and hazard warning signs. The Forest Service completed this work last summer.
- The agency allocated over \$10.8 million in Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) funds for additional road, trail, and facility repair, aerial seeding, and allotment fence repair. This work is currently underway with multiple contracts and agreements.
- In addition, the Region received over \$50 million in Disaster Supplemental funds specifically for work on the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon burned area. The Forest Service is developing long-term restoration priorities, and projects with the state and FEMA, and our USDA partners. The funding and long-term work are focused on the following:
 - Firewood distribution,
 - Rangeland restoration, including repairing fences,
 - Road and bridge reconstruction and replacement,
 - Acequia and ditch repair,
 - Hazard tree removal along roadways for safety,
 - Forest restoration through salvage and reforestation,
 - Water diversion structures and channel repair, and
 - Recreation infrastructure repair.
- For the past year, the Forest Service and USDA, including NRCS, FSA, and Rural Development, have been actively participating in firewood distribution, allotment assessments, fence replacements, roadside hazard tree removal, timber and agricultural industry recovery, watershed stabilization, and Acequia and infrastructure repair.
- The Forest Service is currently partnering with the NRCS through a newly signed MOU between the two agencies that allows us to better work with the State of New Mexico for a broad-scale effort to address headwaters stabilization needs for National Forest System lands and downstream private lands to mitigate as much as possible impacts from flooding.

The Forest Service is partnering with the State of New Mexico to support post wildfire recovery and reforestation by investing in the New Mexico Reforestation Center through New Mexico State University. The Forest Service is investing in the Center using Fiscal Year 2023 Disaster Supplemental Funds via State, Private and Tribal Forestry (SPTF) to support a \$10 million grant for the construction of the Center and a \$160,000 of FY23 IJA funding to support a nursery grant to the state.

Insert 4

The CHAIRMAN. No, but I guess my question is, is that really your role, innovating new products, or is that something that is going to come from the big thinkers you have all across the country that are constantly creating new products? So I will leave that question aside here. So if we have money for that, how much did you spend on at least two occasions of shooting cattle in New Mexico?

Mr. MOORE. I can provide you—

The CHAIRMAN. Eradicating cattle?

Mr. MOORE. I can provide you with the budget that we set aside for that.

The total spent by the Forest Service on the previous two operations was \$125,896.19.

SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

Response from Randy Moore, Chief, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Questions Submitted by Hon. Glenn Thompson, a Representative in Congress from Pennsylvania

Question 1. Chief, the Confronting the Wildfire Crisis Strategy that the Forest Service is implementing calls for treating 20 million acres of National Forest System lands and another 30 million acres of private, state, and Tribal land. Can you tell me how you have been working with partners and selecting projects?

Answer. The agency has invested \$1.2 billion on 21 landscapes using a combination of funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding in FY23. Using a mix of those funds, with Joint Chiefs, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration and other regular appropriations on those landscapes, the Forest Service has treated a total of 694,000 acres in FY22 and FY23 as of August 21, 2023.

Input and thoughts from valued stakeholders have been incorporated into the Wildfire Crisis Strategy (WCS) since its inception. With the assistance of the National Forest Foundation and the Intertribal Timber Council, the agency hosted 11 roundtables across the country to determine successes, challenges, and policy needs associated with the implementation of the WCS. Collaborating with partners early and often in the planning and prioritization under the WCS was one of the more frequent recommendations—including incorporation of shared-data, leveraging capacity, aligning priorities, and effective storytelling.

Each of the WCS landscapes were chosen based on a variety of criteria, collaborative planning, and public support underpinning proposal foundations. Across the 21 WCS Landscapes, Forests and Regions are working with over 280 unique partner organizations including state agencies, Tribal Nations, NGOs, finance partners, and industry partners. Twenty-one of these are new partnerships developed in relation to the WCS.

The agency supports implementation of work on the 30 million acres through grants to states, Tribes and other partners. Utilizing programs such as State Fire Assistance (Capacity), the Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program, Landscape Scale Restoration, and Cross-Boundary Hazardous Fuels funding we are able to treat, through partnership, non-NFS lands in close coordination with work on Federal lands.

Question 1a. How long, on average, does it take for a project to get through the approval process on National Forest System land? How long on private, state, or Tribal land?

Answer. For NFS lands, on average, the completion time from scoping to decision for a categorical exclusion addressing hazardous fuels management is 230 days. The average completion time for the Fuel Break CE on NFS lands (provided in the IIJA) is 130 days. On average, the completion time from scoping to decision for an environmental assessment addressing hazardous fuels management on NFS lands is 860 days.¹ After environmental compliance is complete, delays may occur prior to implementation (for example due to waiting for an operable field season or the contracting process).

Project planning and approval on Tribal, private, and state lands vary, and is dependent on the specific scope of work, funding source as well as compliance with

¹The data was collected from the Forest Service's Planning, Administrative Review, and Litigation System (PALS).

local, state and/or Tribal laws and policies. We do not track the length of time to approve projects on private, state, or Tribal land.

Question 2. Chief, I have long believed in locally-led conservation and restoration and believe this readily applies to the wildfire crisis we are facing. Is the Forest Service working with landowners who have extensive local knowledge and experience on fire suppression? If so, what improvements can we expect to see with the Forest Service's fire suppression efforts this year?

Answer. Addressing the wildfire crisis will require a cross boundary approach to reduce hazardous fuels across all lands. The Forest Service is working with other Federal and state agencies, partners, and private landowners to achieve this work. The response to the wildfire crisis is focused on a proactive approach to fuels management.

Fire suppression will continue to be an important component of fire management. Eighty-nine percent of wildfires are human caused. All human-caused fires are suppressed, as well as any fire that threaten life or property. As such, the Forest Service fire prevention program is still integral to the suppression response, where prevention officers patrol high use areas to educate the public and to seek areas where escaped campfires or other human-caused wildfires, such as equipment and vehicles, are a source of fire ignitions.

When there is a high wildfire risk, prevention teams are deployed to have more presence, education, and patrol in high use areas of a forest. Additionally, the Forest Service can pre-position firefighting resources during periods of high fire danger in an effort to suppress wildfires during initial attack. The Forest Service will continue to work with local partners and communities to inform where fire danger from human-caused starts are a concern and where hazardous fuel treatments should be placed to best modify the fire behavior across all lands.

Question 3. The IIJA provided the Forest Service with a new categorical exclusion (CE) for fuel breaks up to 3,000 acres and emergency authorities to expedite projects in response to natural disasters. It's been over a year and a half since this law was passed, but to my knowledge the Forest Service has only used the CE 31 times during that period and on very limited acreage. Furthermore, we are unaware of any projects using the emergency authority.

How often has the Forest Service used this CE and what is the total number of acres treated? Please provide this Committee with project-specific data (Region, forest, location, and acres treated or planned). Why hasn't the Forest Service used this fuel break CE more often?

Answer. The agency has 54 active projects using the Fuel Breaks CE category (35 projects in environmental compliance and 19 projects in implementation). As of October 3, 2023, there are a total of 40,237 acres treated and there is a total proposed treatment of 85,348 acres using this CE.

Question 3b. How often has the Forest Service used the emergency authority and what is the total number of acres treated? Please provide this Committee with project-specific data (Region, forest, location, and acres treated or planned). Why hasn't the Forest Service used this emergency authority more often?

Answer. In December 2022, USDA announced that Secretary Vilsack had authorized the Forest Service to use the new emergency authority from the IIJA across 250 high-risk fireheds in the western United States as well as several specific post-fire recovery areas. Combined with strategic implementation of existing authorities, this will enable us to move more quickly to apply targeted treatment to the high-risk fireheds identified in our Wildfire Crisis Strategy.

In the first year of implementation, the agency focused on scaling up with shovel-ready projects to get started on this important work. In the second year, the agency began building on this important work through historic investments through IIJA and IRA.

As of August 16, 2023, nine projects have been approved by Chief Moore to use the new emergency authority. These projects are in the planning phase and include 402,340 acres of proposed treatment in National Forests in Arizona, California, Montana, New Mexico, and South Dakota. At least three other projects are pending approval in the Washington Office with another 27 projects pending Regional Office approvals. Training webinars covering procedures and requirements for using this authority are also in development.

Question 4. Chief, collaborative forest restoration projects have been a cornerstone of how the agency has accomplished some of the much needed management across National Forest System lands. In the 2018 Farm Bill, we reauthorized the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) through 2023 and the IIJA authorized an additional funding for the program. Can you provide this Committee

with data on the number acres treated and timber volume sold annually by each CFLRP project from 2018–2023?

Answer. Between 2018 and 2022, the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP) treated a total of 1.7 million acres for hazardous fuel reduction and sold 2.8 million cubic feet (33.6 million board-feet) of timber. Data from 2023 is not yet available.

CFLRP projects implement a wide range of projects that aren't reflected in hazardous fuels acres and timber volume. In the last 5 years, 3.5 million acres of terrestrial habitat were improved, 500 miles of stream habitat were enhanced, and 72,000 acres were treated for invasive species. In that same time frame, the program created 21,435 jobs and generated over \$1 billion in labor income. In 2022, we found that on average 70% of the CFLRP funding stays local to the project area. The program leveraged \$55 million dollars of partner dollars between 2018 and 2022 and added over 100 new partners to our collaborative groups.

The table below includes the hazardous fuels acres treated and timber volume sold for the CFLRP projects from 2018 through 2022. The CFLRP projects vary widely in size, ecosystem, and socioeconomic context, and accomplishments can't be compared across projects.

CFLRP Project Name	State	CFLRP funding years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
			Acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels (top) Timber Volume Sold, ccf (bottom, bold)				
Accelerating Longleaf Pine Restoration in Northeast Florida	FL	2010–2019	46,036 7,898	27,728 26,126	—	—	—
Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group Cornerstone Project	CA	2012–2021	4,008 11,729	16,666 37,065	6,872 23,949	6,563 37,401	—
Burney-Hat Creek Basin	CA	2012–2021	4,292 26,591	2,729 2,285	3,378 17,198	3,987 533	—
Colorado Front Range	CO	2010–2019	6,745 5,217	4,368 4,508	—	—	—
Deschutes Collaborative Forest Project	OR	2010–2019, 2021–2025	10,953 19,092	4,138 1,627	—	12,764 42,195	9,552 30,651
Dinkey Landscape Restoration Project	CA	2010–2019, 2021–2028	7,122 18,447	602 0	—	0 3,392	790 5,550
Four Forest Restoration Initiative	AZ	2010–2019	129,168 180,863	115,142 250,473	—	—	—
Grandfather Restoration Project	NC	2012–2021	5,467 3,585	100 150	1,314 53	—	5,232
Kootenai Valley Resource Initiative	ID	2012–2021	3,209 53,116	5,974 50,737	1,824 20,530	2,507 49,704	1,825 28,227
Lakeview Stewardship	OR	2012–2031	20,280 21,267	14,761 26,166	8,227 6,520	23,633 845	19,086
Longleaf Pine Ecosystem Restoration and Hazardous Fuels Reduction	MS	2012–2021, 2023–2028	63,960 40,182	14,870 23,637	46,844 376	38,500 21,572	—
Missouri Pine-Oak Woodlands Restoration Project	MO	2012–2026	22,475 35,500	14,813 32,473	13,916 16,003	13,156 20,125	24,586 33,464
North Central Washington	WA	2022–2031	—	—	—	—	7,367
North Yuba Forest Partnership	CA	2022–2031	—	—	—	—	49,670
Northeast Washington Forest Vision 2020	WA	2012–2030	9,702 111,722	9,245 21,541	5,875 35,878	6,378 62,163	14,928 4,577
Northern Blues	OR	2021–2030	—	—	—	37,583 42,066	36,627 74,821
Ozark Highlands Ecosystem Restoration	AR & OK	2012–2021	33,176 31,542	42,963 43,193	28,677 17,327	41,775 27,824	—
Pisgah Restoration Initiative	NC & TN	2023–2032	—	—	—	—	—
Rio Chama	CO & NM	2022–2031	—	—	—	—	11,096 38,288
Rogue Basin	OR	2022–2031	—	—	—	—	6,187 21,605
Selway-Middle Fork Clearwater	ID	2010–2019	67 7,381	39 0	—	—	—
Shortleaf Bluestem Community	AR & OK	2012–2027	63,533 71,802	30,727 59,589	41,296 93,502	97,212 33,527	71,920 26,660
Southern Blues Restoration Coalition	OR	2012–2031	41,597 103,224	34,091 110,042	35,278 129,415	26,980 11,585	41,745 21,602
Southwest Colorado Restoration Initiative	CO	2022–2031	—	—	—	—	12,525 51,722
Southwest Jemez Mountains	NM	2010–2019	5,877 14,366	2,812 3,780	—	—	—
Southwestern Crown of the Continent	MT	2010–2019	2,551 13,723	4,226 28,360	—	—	—
Tapash	WA	2010–2019	1,926 5,290	2,961 486	—	—	—
Uncompahgre Plateau	CO	2010–2019	4,442 8,652	21,280 2,170	—	—	—
Weiser-Little Salmon Headwaters	ID	2012–2021	22,740 9,656	20,276 18,821	12,391 43,970	11,509 50,866	—
Western Klamath Restoration Partnership	CA	2022–2031	—	—	—	—	2,118

			2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
CFLRP Project Name	State	CFLRP funding years	Acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels (top) Timber Volume Sold, ccf (bottom, bold)				
Zuni Mountain	NM	2012-2031	— 14,116	— 9,116	— 5,286	— 15,904	8,720 70 8,105

Numbers in *italics* indicate reported accomplishments that were not captured in the database of record. Annual reports with comprehensive project accomplishments can be found on the CFLRP website: <https://www.fs.usda.gov/restoration/CFLRP/results.shtml>.

Question 5. Chief, can you provide this Committee with the amount of standing sawtimber on unreserved National Forest System lands in the lower 48, as identified by the Forest Inventory and Analysis program datasets? How much standing sawtimber is located on lands designated as “insect and disease treatment areas” under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act? Do you know how much standing sawtimber is located on lands designated as “priority landscapes” in the Forest Service’s 10 year Wildfire Strategy?

Answer. The numbers below are estimates from a series of analyses that broadly address the inquiries above and were compiled using existing data and maps to produce estimates of: sawtimber volume on non-reserved National Forest System (NFS) lands; sawtimber volume on non-reserved NFS lands within designated insect and disease areas under sections 602 and 603 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act; and sawtimber volume on non-reserved NFS land within the twenty-one Wildfire Crisis Strategy priority landscapes.

For the purposes of this question, Reserved lands are defined as National Forest System lands that are permanently prohibited from being managed to produce wood products through statute or agency mandate, such that the prohibition cannot be changed through a decision by the land manager. Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Areas are examples of reserved lands found within National Forest System administrative boundaries. However, it is important to understand that standing sawtimber on non-reserved land is not an indicator of the amount of sawtimber available or accessible for harvest. A variety of factors influence availability and accessibility, including but not limited to:

- Land Management Plans and the Management Areas, goals, standards, and guidelines defined within them can restrict the availability of material through, for example designations of suitable/unsuitable areas for timber harvest.
- Market factors determine what is economically accessible.
- Areas may be unsuitable due to site-specific conditions such as steep slopes, erosive soils, being too wet, *etc.*
- Threatened and Endangered Species and Critical Habitat designations can restrict miles of open or closed roads, impacting accessibility of an area.

Please be aware that these and other factors affect the availability of standing sawtimber volume for utilization.

Non-reserved National Forest Service land—sawtimber volume:

Estimates of non-reserved sawtimber volume on Non-reserved National Forest Service land and were generated using Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) plot data. These estimates have a plus/minus one percent error.

Non-reserved National Forest Service land Sawtimber volume (million)	estimate
Cubic-foot	211,882
Board-foot	1,312,238

Sawtimber volume (non-reserved National Forest System land) within insect and disease areas designated under sections 602 and 603 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act:

Estimates of sawtimber volume within insect and disease areas designated under sections 602 and 603 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act (HFRA) were generated using FIA plots located within HFRA areas designated on a spatial layer from the Forest Service Enterprise Data Warehouse.²

²https://apps.fs.usda.gov/arcx/rest/services/EDW/EDW_HealthyForestRestorationAct_01/MapServer/0

Sawtimber volume on non-reserved NFS land within areas designated under sections 602 and 603 of the HFRA (million) estimate
 Cubic-foot 108,335

Sawtimber volume within designated Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes:

Estimates of sawtimber volume on non-reserved National Forest System land within the twenty-one Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscapes, based on FIA plot data. Note that not all land within any Wildfire Crisis Strategy landscape is entirely under National Forest System administration.

Wildfire Crisis Strategy Landscape	Sawtimber volume (mil. cubic ft)	% error
4FRI	3,157	6%
Central Oregon	2,779	4%
Central Washington Initiative	3,730	4%
Colorado Front Range	1,067	8%
Colville Northeast Washington Vision	3,640	3%
Enchanted Circle	654	13%
Klamath River Basin	11,091	4%
Kootenai Complex	1,592	8%
Mount Hood Forest Health and Fire-Resilient Communities	2,525	8%
Nez Perce-Clearwater-Lower Salmon	4,257	7%
North Yuba	1,696	13%
Pine Valley*	N/A	N/A
Plumas Community Protection	620	21%
Prescott	78	42%
San Carlos Apache Tribal Forest Protection	76	52%
Sierra and Elko Fronts	845	22%
Southern California Fireshed Risk Reduction Strategy	262	25%
Southwest Idaho	1,843	9%
Stanislaus	641	20%
Trinity Forest Health and Fire-Resilient Rural Communities	2,806	10%
Wasatch	546	14%

*The Pine Valley landscape did not contain enough forested FIA plots to calculate an accurate estimate.

Question 6. One of the things the Forest Service is required to do under the National Forest Management Act is to develop Forest Plans. Among other things, these plans must include the amount of timber that could be sustainably harvested from each NFS unit over the 10 year life of the Forest Plan. Can the Forest Service accurately tally the current Allowable Sale Quantity, or Permissible Timber Sale Quantity, found in current National Forest Plans, by National Forest, and aggregated both for each Forest Service Region and nationally? Please ensure that these ASQ's/PTSQ's factor in site specific or forest specific plan amendments, whether required by court order or created by the agency.

Answer. We do not corporately track Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) or Permissible Timber Sale Quantity (PTSQ). These are not considered land allocations or designations. Rather, they provide a ceiling of how much volume may be cut from a particular unit according to each Land Management Plan. The previous Planning Rule used ASQ and PTSQ is what is calculated under the current 2012 Planning Rule. ASQ and PTSQ are located within the Land Management Plans for individual National Forests, and to obtain each is not feasible in the timeline required for this response. However, we are seeking this data from each unit and will update Committee staff with the results as soon as we are able to do so.

Question 7. How much of the funding made available under the IIJA for the following provisions has been allocated to timber-producing projects:

- Sec. 40803(c)(11): \$400 million for “mechanical thinning and timber harvesting in an ecologically appropriate manner,”
- Sec. 40803(c)(14): \$250 million for the establishment of “control locations, . . . including installing fuel breaks . . . with a focus on shaded fuel breaks when ecologically appropriate,”

- Sec. 40802(c)(15): \$100 million for hiring crews “for the removal of flammable vegetation on Federal land, and for using materials from treatments to the extent practicable, to produce biochar and other innovative wood products,”
- Sec. 408003 Authorities:
 - \$150 million for 10,000 acre ecological restoration contracts, and
 - \$200 million for grants to states and Tribes to implement ecosystem restoration.

Answer. Investments made available through the IIJA have enabled the agency to perform critical work that protects communities while improving forest health and resiliency. A robust timber industry is critical to address the wildfire crisis and to maintain healthy forests across the nation in the face of climate change. The agency has developed a number of large-scale contracting and agreement tools with partners that will be critical to implementing this work.

A total of \$83,500,000 has been made available for timber producing projects from IIJA provision 40803(c)(11). A total of \$27,300,000 has been made available for timber producing projects from IIJA provision 40803(c)(14). A total of \$5,500,000 has been made available for projects that include development and production of biochar and other products from IIJA provision 40803(c)(15).

In FY 2024, the Forest Service intends to utilize \$40,000,000 of the funds from IIJA provision 40804(b)(1), to restore the ecological health of more than 75,000 acres through a stewardship agreement with the Mule Deer Foundation. Under this agreement, landscape-scale, ecological health restoration will take place in National Forests and Grasslands across seven Forest Service regions (Regions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 10). It is not possible to predict with certainty what proportion of the \$40,000,000 will be used on timber producing projects but there will be some amount of forest products associated with the primary activities of habitat improvement, fuels reduction, and timber stand improvement.

A total of \$15,566,000 has been committed and executed as of the third quarter status report for Good Neighbor Authority timber producing projects from IIJA provision 40804(b)(2)(B) through agreements with state organizations. In FY23 the Forest Service allocated an additional \$7 million from this provision to projects with Tribal Nations using Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) or Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) authorities. The work with Tribal Nations is largely ecosystem restoration activity important to the Tribal Nations involved; projects to date have produced minimal commercial timber volume.

Question 8. In 2015, the Ninth Circuit Court ruled that the Forest Service needed to reinstate consultation with Fish and Wildlife Service following the 2009 designation of critical habitat for the Canada lynx. This decision established a new, ambiguous threshold for Endangered Species Act (ESA) consultations on completed programmatic actions. In 2018, Congress passed a partial fix, but “new information” claims under the *Cottonwood* ruling continue to have damaging implications that delay or prevent forest management altogether.

It’s my understanding that with the expiration of the 5 year partial *Cottonwood* fix this past March, over one hundred forest plans will have to go through ESA re-consultation, which will take years to complete and millions of dollars. The past four Chiefs of the Forest Service testified in support of finding a solution to reverse this decision. Will you commit to working with this Committee on a solution? In your view, how has the *Cottonwood* decision made western communities more vulnerable to wildfires? How many projects have already been delayed due to the *Cottonwood* case? How many more does the Forest Service expect will be delayed if the issue isn’t permanently resolved by Congress?

Answer. With the safe harbor provision in the 2018 Consolidated Appropriations Act expiring this past March, about eighty-seven (87) land management plans across the nation face varying degrees of legal uncertainty. As of August 2023, we have received the following Notices of Intent (NOIs) to sue related to *Cottonwood*:

- 8 new information NOIs related to Forest Plans
- 7 critical habitat NOIs related to Forest Plans

Question 9. Chief, as you know, in the East we have significant challenges with invasive insect and plant species in our forests. In the Allegheny National Forest and across Appalachia, for example, the Forest Service has been trying to address glossy buckthorn for years. How is the Forest Service addressing invasive species? How have farm bill authorities helped the Forest Service work with adjacent private landowners who are also impacted by the spread of invasive species?

Answer. The Allegheny National Forest (ANF) is working to develop a landscape level strategy to mitigate the spread of glossy buckthorn as part of the Allegheny

Forest Health Collaborative. The ANF is currently carrying out its seventh year of a planned 10 year project to treat glossy and common buckthorn on the Forest. Effective treatment involves multiple reentry to impacted areas, with herbicide application, mowing, controlled burn, or other proven measures. The Allegheny Forest Health Collaborative (AFHC), with the ANF as a key partner, was formally established in 2017 to connect intermingled ownerships and interests.

On a national scale, the Forest Service works across Federal, state, Tribal, and private lands to address invasive plants that damage forest and grassland ecosystems and create increased fire and human health risk. Our Forest Health Protection Invasive Plants Program provides approximately \$2 million annually in financial assistance to and works in partnership with Federal agencies, State Departments of Forestry and Agriculture, and Tribes to provide technical assistance directly to landowners and support management actions on the ground. There are several farm bill authorities that have helped prevent and manage invasive species on private lands. These include the Landscape-scale Restoration, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, Good Neighbor Authority, and Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003 Amendments.

Question 10. Chief, last month your agency released the *Mature and Old-Growth Forest* report that defines and inventories those forests on lands managed by the Forest Service. With over ½ of the National Forest System already under some kind of protected status, this proposal is counter-productive, and it seems to me that it will do little more than prevent management on forests that are urgently in need of restoration, hazardous fuels reduction, and other fire prevention activities. In your view, how is this old growth protection proposal compatible with the 10 Year Strategy and the need to better manage tens of millions of acres of Federal lands?

Answer. The agency's work on mature and old-growth forests (MOG) is completely compatible with the 10 Year Strategy. Our definitions for mature and old growth consider both biological and economic aspects using peer reviewed concepts and practices. Given the nature of the public discourse on conservation of mature and old-growth forests, it is essential to have a rigorous, peer-reviewed way to distinguish between areas that are considered economically mature and those that are beginning to reach an ecologically mature condition. Our inventory methods, including the definitions for mature and old-growth forest, were recently accepted for publication in *Forest Ecology and Management*, a highly respected scientific journal.

Describing the transition from young to mature to old in a way that reflects forest type, biophysical setting, and productivity level of the site gives us a firm footing to make the case that active management is often needed, even when the objective is older forest conditions. It strengthens our position on whether older forests are veering away from sustainable conditions and need silvicultural manipulation to get back on track.

Conducting the inventory and threat analysis is helping to quantify and add important context to two major biological factors that combine to create the forest health and wildfire challenges the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management now face. The inventory and threat analysis are showing that fire exclusion resulted in densification of existing forests. The inventory also highlights how fire exclusion allowed forests to move into wetlands, meadows, woodlands, and other more open areas where they did not previously exist and likely will fall victim to fire, insects, or disease. In the east and south, it will also highlight the importance of addressing non-native invasive species, insects, and disease. The threat analysis will quantify the magnitude of these issues and inform the agency's evaluation of when these lands will benefit from treatment, or in some cases the complete removal or type conversion of forests, to address landscape scale forest health and fire related issues. This use of active management is a crucial part of fostering climate resilience in forests and communities.

Question 10a. How many acres of mature and old growth did you find on those lands? Please provide this Committee with documentation of the overlap between the mature and old-growth forest identified by the inventory and the acres at highest risk of wildfire?

Answer. The initial inventory identified more than 32 million acres of old-growth and around 80 million acres of mature forest across 200 combinations of forest types, biophysical settings (*e.g.*, slope aspect, elevation, *etc.*) and productivity levels. The inventory found that old-growth forest represents 18%, and mature forest another 45% of all forested land managed by the Forest Service and BLM.

We have been working on an answer to the question of how many acres of MOG coincide with areas at high risk for fire since we completed the inventory in April 2023. This is not a matter of a simple overlay of GIS layers (maps). Our inventory was based on a fresh level (about 250,000 acre areas) statistical estimate of the

amount of mature or old growth in each fished with a standard error (measure of accuracy). We used Forest Inventory and Analysis (FIA) permanent sample plot data for this purpose. FIA is the most reliable source of quantitative data available. As a result, we have not yet identified specific MOG acres at high risk for fire, and we are hesitant to report these estimates at a very fine scale. Such maps require estimates of conditions that can easily be misinterpreted. We do not have a firm estimate of when we will complete this work, but we are happy to interact with Committee staff as we continue to improve this data.

Question 11. While conducting this Mature and Old-Growth forest inventory and definition exercise, did the Forest Service identify a specific age (e.g., 80 years) at which all forest types are considered either “old growth” or “mature”?

Answer. We do not believe age alone is a reliable indicator of maturity and there is certainly no one age that would work for all forest types. The age when a stand begins to develop old-growth characteristics will vary depending on many factors even within a single forest type. We developed a framework that honors the 30 years of work the agency has done in collaboration with the public to develop regional old-growth definitions and include them in our forest plans. Our mature definitions are built on these well-established old-growth definitions. These definitions sometimes include age as a factor but never as sole factor. They depend more on structural characteristics that are easily recognized where age is relatively difficult to determine, especially in uneven age stands. In addition, different forest types develop at very different rates, so what we consider old for Ponderosa pine is very different than Southern pine.

Question 12. Will wildfire risk reduction projects and fire suppression efforts be interrupted by the agency’s work on old-growth and mature forests? Will the agency divert fire suppression resources to protect “old-growth” forests?

Answer. Wildfire risk reduction as well as fire suppression efforts will not be interrupted by the agency’s work on old-growth and mature forests. Old growth and mature forests are values that the agency considers when conducting fire management operations including hazardous fuels reduction work. As part of the response to an unplanned ignition, the agency will assess the values that will likely be impacted by the fire and determine where to deploy resources based on the highest probability of success. Because old growth and mature forest are part of the values considered, resources can be assigned to reduce fire impacts to these values.

The agency’s policy is for units to continue to follow existing direction and guidance with regard to management in and around mature and old growth. This is included in land management plans and in some cases regional direction or guidelines. Moving ahead, Executive Order 14072 makes it clear that the President considers fire, insects, disease, and other stressors related to the changing climate as the major threats to mature and old-growth forests. This provides direction to the threat analysis required by the Executive Order. This is especially true as climate change accelerates. Again, the direction in the Executive Order does not change priorities for firefighting, and we will continue to prioritize fire suppression using existing guidance.

Question 13. The agency’s Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking on Climate Resilience mentions “non-climate informed” timber harvest and reforestation practices. What does this mean? Will climate resilience be prioritized over wildfire risk reduction activities?

Answer. “Non-climate informed” harvest/practices refer to actions that were not sufficiently (or at all) informed by assessment of how climate-amplified forest stressors may interact with the action. Climate-informed management actions ideally include intentional adaptation measures to minimize risk to forest resilience, management objectives, and forest benefits arising from climate change.

In early 2022, the Forest Service released the Wildfire Crisis Strategy, with the 10 year goal of treating an additional 20 million acres on the National Forest System and an additional 30 million acres on other lands for fuels and forest health. The strategy responds to the effects of climate change in degrading forest health and elevating wildfire risk, especially in the Western United States, by funding activities aligned with climate adaptation goals related to wildfires. The agency is integrating climate change considerations into landscape prioritization and treatment design and implementation. Treatments can help prepare landscapes for the impacts of other climate-intensified disturbances, including insect outbreaks. Prioritizing wildfire risk reduction directly supports both near- and long-term climate resilience.

Question 14. The Forest Service Electric Vehicle Pilot Program is testing electric vehicle usage in three National Forests, including the Allegheny National Forest in my District. In the USFS budget, it looks as though a total of \$7.6 million from hazardous fuel reduction and wildfire preparedness is getting the cut to support these

EV efforts. I cannot discern how it's appropriate to use resources on EVs in National Forests—in the name of 'climate change'—while communities in the West are burning, livelihoods are upended, and wildfire emissions are far greater than any EV fleet can reduce. What are your plans to offset this loss of resources for mitigating megafires and get at least \$7.6 million worth of hazardous fuel reduction and wildfire preparedness on the ground?

Answer. The FY 2024 President's Budget proposed an increase of \$7.6 million in hazardous fuels and wildfire preparedness funding to accelerate the procurement of zero emission vehicles (ZEV) to replace some Forest Service light duty vehicles to support electrification goals mandated by Executive Order 14057. Because this was a proposed increase, there would not be a reduction in hazardous fuels mitigation or wildfire preparedness as a result of the proposed ZEV fleet procurement.

Question Submitted by Hon. Doug LaMalfa, a Representative in Congress from California

Question 1. Chief Moore, according to an Environmental Impact Statement from the United States Forest Service, "it is estimated that less than ½ of 1 percent of aerial fire retardant drops may reach the 300' or larger buffer" for restricted zones of aerial fire retardant use. Despite the minuscule amount of fire retardant that goes near waterways, and its safety record, fire retardant is under attack by radical activists who, through the courts, are attempting to force the Forest Service to obtain NPDES permits per the Clean Water Act and/or stop its use altogether. It is my understanding that the Forest service is working with EPA to develop a general permit for aerial fire retardant; but it will take 2 to 3 years to develop, and 47 states would issue their own permits, which would add another year to the process. The West is facing a true wildfire crisis. We no longer have a fire season, rather than a fire year; and wildfires have only gotten worse in recent years. We simply don't have time to wait for the Forest Service to acquire Federal permits for continued use of this critical tool, when lives, homes, and our forests are at severe risk of devastating wildfire. Chief, can you comment on fire retardant and the Forest Service's use of this important tool? How does USDA and the Forest Service plan to ensure the continued use of fire retardant when EPA is indicating it will take years to develop a permit? What will happen if the Forest Service is forced to stop using fire retardant and/or be required to acquire unnecessary permits for its continued use?

Answer. On May 26, 2023, Judge Dana L. Christensen of the Montana Federal district court issued an order in the case of *Forest Service Employees for Environmental Ethics v. United States Forest Service* (case 9:22-cv-00168-DLC). The order states that the "USFS is not enjoined from utilizing the aerial deployment of fire retardant as a tool to fight wildfires."

Aerial application of fire retardant is part of the Forest Service's integrated fire-fighting strategy and is an essential tool that the Forest Service uses in various situations in support of ground resources. Fire retardant is intended to slow the rate of fire spread by cooling and coating fuels, depleting the fire of oxygen, and slowing the rate of fuel combustion as the retardant's inorganic salts change how fuels burn. Retardant has a lasting capability and continues to be effective when dry to slow or reduce fire behavior. This gives firefighters time to get in place, safely and effectively engage a fire, and meet the goals and objectives for the incident. When the Forest Service deems the use of retardant appropriate, firefighters strategically place retardant in locations that give ground resources and other aerial resources time to engage, which gives them a much higher probability of success. The Forest Service prioritizes the use of retardant to support initial attack fires and ensure the fires can be contained quickly by ground resources to protect high values at risk (communities and high value lands).

The Forest Service relies on fire retardant as an essential tool to enable safe deployment of ground-based firefighting resources. While we cannot precisely predict the impact of not being able to use retardant, we can say that without retardant, our firefighting capability would be diminished. The Forest Service is committed to Clean Water Act compliance and protection of water quality and keeping our communities and wildland firefighters safe. We are working with the Environmental Protection Agency to develop a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System general permit, which is expected to take over 2 years. The Forest Service also needs to engage with 47 states in obtaining the necessary permits.

Questions Submitted by Hon. Barry Moore, a Representative in Congress from Alabama

Question 1. This spring, Alabama tracked below average during the wildfire season due to our private forester's robust resource management. The Alabama Forestry Commission responded to 927 wildfires this year, as opposed to 2,500 wildfires

in years prior. Although wildfires occurred with less frequency in Alabama this year, 927 fires it still too many—these fires threaten rural communities, those who live there and their livelihoods. Does the Forest Service have options to engage private forest owners on wildfire prevention efforts, such as cross boundary fuel breaks and fuel reduction projects? Will you keep this Committee informed of how you are working with private forest owners to address the wildfire crisis, especially in the southeast?

Answer. The Forest Service has a long history of working collaboratively across ownership boundaries to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest conditions. The agency is grateful for the opportunities provided in the IIJA and IRA to increase the pace and scale of our wildfire risk reduction work. These investments are a critical down payment to the agency's overall funding which is needed to truly meet the need of the wildfire crisis across the country. The Wildfire Crisis Strategy outlines the need to treat approximately 20 million acres on NFS lands and an additional 30 million acres across all other jurisdictions. This work includes fuels mitigation as well as prevention, across ownerships.

The agency will continue to use all funding sources to focus on the full implementation of the Wildfire Crisis strategy, utilizing private forestland programs such as State Fire Assistance (Capacity), the Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program, Landscape Scale Restoration, and Cross-Boundary Hazardous Fuels funding to treat non-NFS lands in close coordination with work on Federal lands. This cross-boundary focus is important in states such as Alabama with mixed ownership landscapes. We will keep the Committee informed of how the Forest Service is working with private forest owners to address the wildfire crisis.

Question 2. In the IRA, \$5 billion was obligated to the Forest Service to spend on both Federal and non-Federal forests. This is in addition to the new and expanded authorities provided to the Forest Service in the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bills. How have you used this funding to help private forest owners, especially those in southeast Alabama, to reduce wildfire risk and improve forest health? How can this Committee work with you to provide proper oversight of this funding?

Answer. The IRA Hazardous Fuels provision is only eligible for Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas as defined by the Healthy Forest Restoration Act 2003 on NFS lands, not privately owned forest lands. However, other provisions in the IRA and IIJA can be used to address forest health issues on non-Federal lands. For example, the IRA Urban and Community Forestry program provided over \$1.25 billion of IRA funding to state agencies for competitive grant programs. Of that total, \$8.57 million went to the State of Alabama. The Wood Innovations Program encourages use of wood material from fire risk reduction and forest health treatments and announced \$10 million in IRA funded projects in June 2023. Also, the \$1.5 billion of IIJA funds for Community Wildfire Defense Grants will help further wildfire mitigation and risk projects on private lands.

The IRA Landowner Assistance provisions regarding climate and forest resilience, targeted especially for underserved and small acreage landowners, may provide additional opportunities, and those funding opportunities will be announced in the coming months. Through IRA, IIJA, and regular appropriations, the Forest Service has provided the State of Alabama over \$8 million to support activities on state, private or Tribal lands.