

HEALTHY FORESTS RESTORATION ACT OF 2003

[Public Law 108–148; approved Dec. 3, 2003]

[As Amended Through P.L. 117–328, Enacted December 29, 2022]

【Currency: This publication is a compilation of the text of Public Law 108–148. It was last amended by the public law listed in the As Amended Through note above and below at the bottom of each page of the pdf version and reflects current law through the date of the enactment of the public law listed at <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/collection/comps/>】

【Note: While this publication does not represent an official version of any Federal statute, substantial efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of its contents. The official version of Federal law is found in the United States Statutes at Large and in the United States Code. The legal effect to be given to the Statutes at Large and the United States Code is established by statute (1 U.S.C. 112, 204).】

AN ACT To improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. [16 U.S.C. 6501 note] SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the “Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003”.

(b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Purposes.
- Sec. 3. Definitions.

TITLE I—HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION ON FEDERAL LAND

- Sec. 101. Definitions.
- Sec. 102. Authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects.
- Sec. 103. Prioritization.
- Sec. 104. Environmental analysis.
- Sec. 105. Special administrative review process.
- Sec. 106. Judicial review in United States district courts.
- Sec. 107. Effect of title.
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TITLE II—BIOMASS

- Sec. 201. Improved biomass use research program.
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- Sec. 301. Findings and purposes.
- Sec. 302. Watershed forestry assistance program.
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- Sec. 303. Water Source Protection Program.
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TITLE IV—INSECT INFESTATIONS AND RELATED DISEASES

- Sec. 401. Findings and purpose.
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- Sec. 501. Establishment of healthy forests reserve program.
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 Sec. 506. Protections and measures
 Sec. 507. Involvement by other agencies and organizations.
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TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS

- Sec. 601. Forest stands inventory and monitoring program to improve detection of and response to environmental threats.
 Sec. 602. Designation of treatment areas.
 Sec. 603. Administrative review.
 Sec. 604. Stewardship end result contracting projects.
 Sec. 605. Wildfire resilience projects.
 Sec. 606. Categorical exclusion for greater sage-grouse and mule deer habitat.

SEC. 2. [16 U.S.C. 6501] PURPOSES.

The purposes of this Act are—

(1) to reduce wildfire risk to communities, municipal water supplies, and other at-risk Federal land through a collaborative process of planning, prioritizing, and implementing hazardous fuel reduction projects;

(2) to authorize grant programs to improve the commercial value of forest biomass (that otherwise contributes to the risk of catastrophic fire or insect or disease infestation) for producing electric energy, useful heat, transportation fuel, and petroleum-based product substitutes, and for other commercial purposes;

(3) to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape;

(4) to promote systematic gathering of information to address the impact of insect and disease infestations and other damaging agents on forest and rangeland health;

(5) to improve the capacity to detect insect and disease infestations at an early stage, particularly with respect to hardwood forests; and

(6) to protect, restore, and enhance forest ecosystem components—

(A) to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species;

(B) to improve biological diversity; and

(C) to enhance productivity and carbon sequestration.

SEC. 3. [16 U.S.C. 6502] DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land” means—

(A) land of the National Forest System (as defined in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609(a))) administered by the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service; and

(B) public lands (as defined in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702)), the surface of which is administered by the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe” has the meaning given the term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 450b).

TITLE I—HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION ON FEDERAL LAND

SEC. 101. [16 U.S.C. 6511] DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) AT-RISK COMMUNITY.—The term “at-risk community” means an area—

(A) that is comprised of—

(i) an interface community as defined in the notice entitled “Wildland Urban Interface Communities Within the Vicinity of Federal Lands That Are at High Risk From Wildfire” issued by the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior in accordance with title IV of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (114 Stat. 1009) (66 Fed. Reg. 753, January 4, 2001); or

(ii) a group of homes and other structures with basic infrastructure and services (such as utilities and collectively maintained transportation routes) within or adjacent to Federal land;

(B) in which conditions are conducive to a large-scale wildland fire disturbance event; and

(C) for which a significant threat to human life or property exists as a result of a wildland fire disturbance event.

(2) AUTHORIZED HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION PROJECT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “authorized hazardous fuel reduction project” means the measures and methods described in the definition of “appropriate tools” contained in the glossary of the Implementation Plan, on Federal land described in section 102(a) and conducted under sections 103 and 104.

(B) INCLUSION.—The term “authorized hazardous fuel reduction project” includes, using the measures and methods described in subparagraph (A), the installation of—

(i) a natural or manmade change in fuel characteristics that affects fire behavior such that a fire can

be more readily controlled (commonly known as a “fuel break”); and

(ii) a natural or constructed barrier used to stop or check a fire or to provide a control line from which to work to stop or check a fire (commonly known as a “firebreak”).

(3) **COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN.**—The term “community wildfire protection plan” means a plan for an at-risk community that—

(A) is developed within the context of the collaborative agreements and the guidance established by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council and agreed to by the applicable local government, local fire department, and State agency responsible for forest management, in consultation with interested parties and the Federal land management agencies managing land in the vicinity of the at-risk community;

(B) identifies and prioritizes areas for hazardous fuel reduction treatments and recommends the types and methods of treatment on Federal and non-Federal land that will protect 1 or more at-risk communities and essential infrastructure; and

(C) recommends measures to reduce structural ignitability throughout the at-risk community.

(4) **CONDITION CLASS 2.**—The term “condition class 2”, with respect to an area of Federal land, means the condition class description developed by the Forest Service Rocky Mountain Research Station in the general technical report entitled “Development of Coarse-Scale Spatial Data for Wildland Fire and Fuel Management” (RMRS–87), dated April 2000 (including any subsequent revision to the report), under which—

(A) fire regimes on the land have been moderately altered from historical ranges;

(B) there exists a moderate risk of losing key ecosystem components from fire;

(C) fire frequencies have increased or decreased from historical frequencies by 1 or more return intervals, resulting in moderate changes to—

(i) the size, frequency, intensity, or severity of fires; or

(ii) landscape patterns; and

(D) vegetation attributes have been moderately altered from the historical range of the attributes.

(5) **CONDITION CLASS 3.**—The term “condition class 3”, with respect to an area of Federal land, means the condition class description developed by the Rocky Mountain Research Station in the general technical report referred to in paragraph (4) (including any subsequent revision to the report), under which—

(A) fire regimes on land have been significantly altered from historical ranges;

(B) there exists a high risk of losing key ecosystem components from fire;

- (C) fire frequencies have departed from historical frequencies by multiple return intervals, resulting in dramatic changes to—
- (i) the size, frequency, intensity, or severity of fires; or
 - (ii) landscape patterns; and
- (D) vegetation attributes have been significantly altered from the historical range of the attributes.
- (6) DAY.—The term “day” means—
- (A) a calendar day; or
 - (B) if a deadline imposed by this title would expire on a nonbusiness day, the end of the next business day.
- (7) DECISION DOCUMENT.—The term “decision document” means—
- (A) a decision notice (as that term is used in the Forest Service Handbook);
 - (B) a decision record (as that term is used in the Bureau of Land Management Handbook); and
 - (C) a record of decision (as that term is used in applicable regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality).
- (8) FIRE REGIME I.—The term “fire regime I” means an area—
- (A) in which historically there have been low-severity fires with a frequency of 0 through 35 years; and
 - (B) that is located primarily in low elevation forests of pine, oak, or pinyon juniper.
- (9) FIRE REGIME II.—The term “fire regime II” means an area—
- (A) in which historically there are stand replacement severity fires with a frequency of 0 through 35 years; and
 - (B) that is located primarily in low- to mid-elevation rangeland, grassland, or shrubland.
- (10) FIRE REGIME III.—The term “fire regime III” means an area—
- (A) in which historically there are mixed severity fires with a frequency of 35 through 100 years; and
 - (B) that is located primarily in forests of mixed conifer, dry Douglas fir, or wet Ponderosa pine.
- (11) IMPLEMENTATION PLAN.—The term “Implementation Plan” means the Implementation Plan for the Comprehensive Strategy for a Collaborative Approach for Reducing Wildland Fire Risks to Communities and the Environment, dated May 2002, developed pursuant to the conference report to accompany the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (House Report No. 106–64) (and subsequent revisions).
- (12) MUNICIPAL WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM.—The term “municipal water supply system” means the reservoirs, canals, ditches, flumes, laterals, pipes, pipelines, and other surface facilities and systems constructed or installed for the collection, impoundment, storage, transportation, or distribution of drinking water.

(13) RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN.—The term “resource management plan” means—

(A) a land and resource management plan prepared for 1 or more units of land of the National Forest System described in section 3(1)(A) under section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604); or

(B) a land use plan prepared for 1 or more units of the public land described in section 3(1)(B) under section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712).

(14) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to land of the National Forest System described in section 3(1)(A); and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands described in section 3(1)(B).

(15) THREATENED AND ENDANGERED SPECIES HABITAT.—The term “threatened and endangered species habitat” means Federal land identified in—

(A) a determination that a species is an endangered species or a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(B) a designation of critical habitat of the species under that Act; or

(C) a recovery plan prepared for the species under that Act.

(16) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—The term “wildland-urban interface” means—

(A) an area within or adjacent to an at-risk community that is identified in recommendations to the Secretary in a community wildfire protection plan; or

(B) in the case of any area for which a community wildfire protection plan is not in effect—

(i) an area extending ½-mile from the boundary of an at-risk community;

(ii) an area within 1½ miles of the boundary of an at-risk community, including any land that—

(I) has a sustained steep slope that creates the potential for wildfire behavior endangering the at-risk community;

(II) has a geographic feature that aids in creating an effective fire break, such as a road or ridge top; or

(III) is in condition class 3, as documented by the Secretary in the project-specific environmental analysis; and

(iii) an area that is adjacent to an evacuation route for an at-risk community that the Secretary determines, in cooperation with the at-risk community, requires hazardous fuel reduction to provide safer evacuation from the at-risk community.

SEC. 102. [16 U.S.C. 6512] AUTHORIZED HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS.

(a) **AUTHORIZED PROJECTS.**—As soon as practicable after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall implement authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects, consistent with the Implementation Plan, on—

(1) Federal land in wildland-urban interface areas;

(2) condition class 3 Federal land, in such proximity to a municipal water supply system or a stream feeding such a system within a municipal watershed that a significant risk exists that a fire disturbance event would have adverse effects on the water quality of the municipal water supply or the maintenance of the system, including a risk to water quality posed by erosion following such a fire disturbance event;

(3) condition class 2 Federal land located within fire regime I, fire regime II, or fire regime III, in such proximity to a municipal water supply system or a stream feeding such a system within a municipal watershed that a significant risk exists that a fire disturbance event would have adverse effects on the water quality of the municipal water supply or the maintenance of the system, including a risk to water quality posed by erosion following such a fire disturbance event;

(4) Federal land on which windthrow or blowdown, ice storm damage, the existence of an epidemic of disease or insects, or the presence of such an epidemic on immediately adjacent land and the imminent risk it will spread, poses a significant threat to an ecosystem component, or forest or rangeland resource, on the Federal land or adjacent non-Federal land; and

(5) Federal land not covered by paragraphs (1) through (4) that contains threatened and endangered species habitat, if—

(A) natural fire regimes on that land are identified as being important for, or wildfire is identified as a threat to, an endangered species, a threatened species, or habitat of an endangered species or threatened species in a species recovery plan prepared under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533), or a notice published in the Federal Register determining a species to be an endangered species or a threatened species or designating critical habitat;

(B) the authorized hazardous fuel reduction project will provide enhanced protection from catastrophic wildfire for the endangered species, threatened species, or habitat of the endangered species or threatened species; and

(C) the Secretary complies with any applicable guidelines specified in any management or recovery plan described in subparagraph (A).

(b) **RELATION TO AGENCY PLANS.**—An authorized hazardous fuel reduction project shall be conducted consistent with the resource management plan and other relevant administrative policies or decisions applicable to the Federal land covered by the project.

(c) **ACREAGE LIMITATION.**—Not more than a total of 20,000,000 acres of Federal land may be treated under authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects.

(d) EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND.—The Secretary may not conduct an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project that would occur on—

(1) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(2) Federal land on which the removal of vegetation is prohibited or restricted by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation (including the applicable implementation plan); or

(3) a Wilderness Study Area.

(e) OLD GROWTH STANDS.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection and subsection (f):

(A) APPLICABLE PERIOD.—The term “applicable period” means—

(i) the 2-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act; or

(ii) in the case of a resource management plan that the Secretary is in the process of revising as of the date of enactment of this Act, the 3-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act.

(B) COVERED PROJECT.—The term “covered project” means an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project carried out on land described in paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (5) of subsection (a).

(C) MANAGEMENT DIRECTION.—The term “management direction” means definitions, designations, standards, guidelines, goals, or objectives established for an old growth stand under a resource management plan developed in accordance with applicable law, including section 6(g)(3)(B) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(B)).

(D) OLD GROWTH STAND.—The term “old growth stand” has the meaning given the term under management direction used pursuant to paragraphs (3) and (4), based on the structure and composition characteristic of the forest type, and in accordance with applicable law, including section 6(g)(3)(B) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(g)(3)(B)).

(2) PROJECT REQUIREMENTS.—In carrying out a covered project, the Secretary shall fully maintain, or contribute toward the restoration of, the structure and composition of old growth stands according to the pre-fire suppression old growth conditions characteristic of the forest type, taking into account the contribution of the stand to landscape fire adaptation and watershed health, and retaining the large trees contributing to old growth structure.

(3) NEWER MANAGEMENT DIRECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the management direction for an old growth stand was established on or after December 15, 1993, the Secretary shall meet the requirements of paragraph (2) in carrying out a covered project by implementing the management direction.

(B) AMENDMENTS OR REVISIONS.—Any amendment or revision to management direction for which final administrative approval is granted after the date of enactment of

this Act shall be consistent with paragraph (2) for the purpose of carrying out covered projects.

(4) OLDER MANAGEMENT DIRECTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—If the management direction for an old growth stand was established before December 15, 1993, the Secretary shall meet the requirements of paragraph (2) in carrying out a covered project during the applicable period by implementing the management direction.

(B) REVIEW REQUIRED.—Subject to subparagraph (C), during the applicable period for management direction referred to in subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall—

(i) review the management direction for affected covered projects, taking into account any relevant scientific information made available since the adoption of the management direction; and

(ii) amend the management direction for affected covered projects to be consistent with paragraph (2), if necessary to reflect relevant scientific information the Secretary did not consider in formulating the management direction.

(C) REVIEW NOT COMPLETED.—If the Secretary does not complete the review of the management direction in accordance with subparagraph (B) before the end of the applicable period, the Secretary shall not carry out any portion of affected covered projects in stands that are identified as old growth stands (based on substantial supporting evidence) by any person during scoping, within the period—

(i) beginning at the close of the applicable period for the management direction governing the affected covered projects; and

(ii) ending on the earlier of—

(I) the date the Secretary completes the action required by subparagraph (B) for the management direction applicable to the affected covered projects; or

(II) the date on which the acreage limitation specified in subsection (c) (as that limitation may be adjusted by a subsequent Act of Congress) is reached.

(5) LIMITATION TO COVERED PROJECTS.—Nothing in this subsection requires the Secretary to revise or otherwise amend a resource management plan to make the project requirements of paragraph (2) apply to an activity other than a covered project.

(f) LARGE TREE RETENTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except in old growth stands where the management direction is consistent with subsection (e)(2), the Secretary shall carry out a covered project in a manner that—

(A) focuses largely on small diameter trees, thinning, strategic fuel breaks, and prescribed fire to modify fire behavior, as measured by the projected reduction of uncharacteristically severe wildfire effects for the forest

type (such as adverse soil impacts, tree mortality or other impacts); and

(B) maximizes the retention of large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote fire-resilient stands.

(2) WILDFIRE RISK.—Nothing in this subsection prevents achievement of the purposes described in section 2(1).

(g) MONITORING AND ASSESSING FOREST AND RANGELAND HEALTH.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—For each Forest Service administrative region and each Bureau of Land Management State Office, the Secretary shall—

(A) monitor the results of a representative sample of the projects authorized under this title for each management unit; and

(B) not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and each 5 years thereafter, issue a report that includes—

(i) an evaluation of the progress towards project goals; and

(ii) recommendations for modifications to the projects and management treatments.

(2) CONSISTENCY OF PROJECTS WITH RECOMMENDATIONS.—An authorized hazardous fuel reduction project approved following the issuance of a monitoring report shall, to the maximum extent practicable, be consistent with any applicable recommendations in the report.

(3) SIMILAR VEGETATION TYPES.—The results of a monitoring report shall be made available for use (if appropriate) in an authorized hazardous fuels reduction project conducted in a similar vegetation type on land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

(4) MONITORING AND ASSESSMENTS.—Monitoring and assessment shall include a description of the changes in condition class, using the Fire Regime Condition Class Guidebook or successor guidance, specifically comparing end results to—

(A) pretreatment conditions;

(B) historical fire regimes; and

(C) any applicable watershed or landscape goals or objectives in the resource management plan or other relevant direction.

(5) MULTIPARTY MONITORING.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In an area where significant interest is expressed in multiparty monitoring, the Secretary shall establish a multiparty monitoring, evaluation, and accountability process in order to assess the positive or negative ecological and social effects of authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects and projects conducted pursuant to section 404.

(B) DIVERSE STAKEHOLDERS.—The Secretary shall include diverse stakeholders (including interested citizens and Indian tribes) in the process required under subparagraph (A).

(C) FUNDING.—Funds to carry out this paragraph may be derived from operations funds for projects described in subparagraph (A).

(6) COLLECTION OF MONITORING DATA.—The Secretary may collect monitoring data by entering into cooperative agreements or contracts with, or providing grants to, small or micro-businesses, cooperatives, nonprofit organizations, Youth Conservation Corps work crews, or related State, local, and other non-Federal conservation corps.

(7) TRACKING.—For each administrative unit, the Secretary shall track acres burned, by the degree of severity, by large wildfires (as defined by the Secretary).

(8) MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE OF TREATED AREAS.—The Secretary shall, to the maximum extent practicable, develop a process for monitoring the need for maintenance of treated areas, over time, in order to preserve the forest health benefits achieved.

SEC. 103. [16 U.S.C. 6513] PRIORITIZATION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with the Implementation Plan, the Secretary shall develop an annual program of work for Federal land that gives priority to authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects that provide for the protection of at-risk communities or watersheds or that implement community wildfire protection plans.

(b) COLLABORATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall consider recommendations under subsection (a) that are made by at-risk communities that have developed community wildfire protection plans.

(2) EXEMPTION.—Chapter 10 of title 5, United States Code, shall not apply to the planning process and recommendations concerning community wildfire protection plans.

(c) ADMINISTRATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Federal agency involvement in developing a community wildfire protection plan, or a recommendation made in a community wildfire protection plan, shall not be considered a Federal agency action under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(2) COMPLIANCE.—In implementing authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects on Federal land, the Secretary shall, in accordance with section 104, comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

(d) FUNDING ALLOCATION.—

(1) FEDERAL LAND.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Subject to subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall use not less than 50 percent of the funds allocated for authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects in the wildland-urban interface.

(B) APPLICABILITY AND ALLOCATION.—The funding allocation in subparagraph (A) shall apply at the national level. The Secretary may allocate the proportion of funds differently than is required under subparagraph (A) within individual management units as appropriate, in particular

to conduct authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects on land described in section 102(a)(4).

(C) WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—In the case of an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project for which a decision notice is issued during the 1-year period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall use existing definitions of the term “wildland-urban interface” rather than the definition of that term provided under section 101.

(2) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In providing financial assistance under any provision of law for hazardous fuel reduction projects on non-Federal land, the Secretary shall consider recommendations made by at-risk communities that have developed community wildfire protection plans.

(B) PRIORITY.—In allocating funding under this paragraph, the Secretary should, to the maximum extent practicable, give priority to communities that have adopted a community wildfire protection plan or have taken proactive measures to encourage willing property owners to reduce fire risk on private property.

(e) CROSS-BOUNDARY HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS.—

(1) DEFINITIONS.—In this subsection:

(A) HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION PROJECT.—The term “hazardous fuel reduction project” means a hazardous fuel reduction project described in paragraph (2).

(B) NON-FEDERAL LAND.—The term “non-Federal land” includes—

- (i) State land;
- (ii) county land;
- (iii) Tribal land;
- (iv) private land; and
- (v) other non-Federal land.

(2) GRANTS.—The Secretary may make grants to State foresters to support hazardous fuel reduction projects that incorporate treatments in landscapes across ownership boundaries on Federal and non-Federal land, particularly in areas identified as priorities in applicable State-wide forest resource assessments or strategies under section 2A(a) of the Cooperative Forestry Assistance Act of 1978 (16 U.S.C. 2101a(a)), as mutually agreed to by the State forester and the Regional Forester.

(3) LAND TREATMENTS.—To conduct and fund treatments for hazardous fuel reduction projects carried out by State foresters using grants under paragraph (2), the Secretary may use the authorities of the Secretary relating to cooperation and technical and financial assistance, including the good neighbor authority under—

(A) section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a); and

(B) section 331 of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2001 (16 U.S.C. 1011 note; Public Law 106–291).

(4) COOPERATION.—In carrying out a hazardous fuel reduction project using a grant under paragraph (2) on non-Federal land, the State forester, in consultation with the Secretary—

(A) shall consult with any applicable owners of the non-Federal land; and

(B) shall not implement the hazardous fuel reduction project on non-Federal land without the consent of the owner of the non-Federal land.

(5) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this subsection \$20,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

SEC. 104. ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.

(a) AUTHORIZED HAZARDOUS FUEL REDUCTION PROJECTS.—Except as otherwise provided in this title, the Secretary shall conduct authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects in accordance with—

(1) the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4331 et seq.); and

(2) other applicable laws.

(b) ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT OR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT.—The Secretary shall prepare an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement pursuant to section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)) for each authorized hazardous fuel reduction project.

(c) CONSIDERATION OF ALTERNATIVES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (d), in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement prepared under subsection (b), the Secretary shall study, develop, and describe—

(A) the proposed agency action;

(B) the alternative of no action; and

(C) an additional action alternative, if the additional alternative—

(i) is proposed during scoping or the collaborative process under subsection (f); and

(ii) meets the purpose and need of the project, in accordance with regulations promulgated by the Council on Environmental Quality.

(2) MULTIPLE ADDITIONAL ALTERNATIVES.—If more than 1 additional alternative is proposed under paragraph (1)(C), the Secretary shall—

(A) select which additional alternative to consider, which is a choice that is in the sole discretion of the Secretary; and

(B) provide a written record describing the reasons for the selection.

(d) ALTERNATIVE ANALYSIS PROCESS FOR PROJECTS IN WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE.—

(1) PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION AND 1 ACTION ALTERNATIVE.—For an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project that is proposed to be conducted in the wildland-urban interface, the Secretary is not required to study, develop, or describe more than the proposed agency action and 1 action alter-

native in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)).

(2) PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (1), but subject to paragraph (3), if an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project proposed to be conducted in the wildland-urban interface is located no further than 1½ miles from the boundary of an at-risk community, the Secretary is not required to study, develop, or describe any alternative to the proposed agency action in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)).

(3) PROPOSED AGENCY ACTION AND COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN ALTERNATIVE.—In the case of an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project described in paragraph (2), if the at-risk community has adopted a community wildfire protection plan and the proposed agency action does not implement the recommendations in the plan regarding the general location and basic method of treatments, the Secretary shall evaluate the recommendations in the plan as an alternative to the proposed agency action in the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement prepared pursuant to section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)).

(e) PUBLIC NOTICE AND MEETING.—

(1) PUBLIC NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide notice of each authorized hazardous fuel reduction project in accordance with applicable regulations and administrative guidelines.

(2) PUBLIC MEETING.—During the preparation stage of each authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, the Secretary shall—

(A) conduct a public meeting at an appropriate location proximate to the administrative unit of the Federal land on which the authorized hazardous fuel reduction project will be conducted; and

(B) provide advance notice of the location, date, and time of the meeting.

(f) PUBLIC COLLABORATION.—In order to encourage meaningful public participation during preparation of authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects, the Secretary shall facilitate collaboration among State and local governments and Indian tribes, and participation of interested persons, during the preparation of each authorized fuel reduction project in a manner consistent with the Implementation Plan.

(g) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND PUBLIC COMMENT.—In accordance with section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)) and the applicable regulations and administrative guidelines, the Secretary shall provide an opportunity for public comment during the preparation of any environmental assessment or environmental impact statement for an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project.

(h) **DECISION DOCUMENT.**—The Secretary shall sign a decision document for authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects and provide notice of the final agency actions.

SEC. 105. [16 U.S.C. 6515] SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROCESS.

(a) **INTERIM FINAL REGULATIONS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 30 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall promulgate interim final regulations to establish a predecisional administrative review process for the period described in paragraph (2) that will serve as the sole means by which a person can seek administrative review regarding an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project on Forest Service land.

(2) **PERIOD.**—The predecisional administrative review process required under paragraph (1) shall occur during the period—

(A) beginning after the completion of the environmental assessment or environmental impact statement; and

(B) ending not later than the date of the issuance of the final decision approving the project.

(3) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible to participate in the administrative review process for an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project under paragraph (1), a person shall submit to the Secretary, during scoping or the public comment period for the draft environmental analysis for the project, specific written comments that relate to the proposed action.

(4) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The interim final regulations promulgated under paragraph (1) shall take effect on the date of promulgation of the regulations.

(b) **FINAL REGULATIONS.**—The Secretary shall promulgate final regulations to establish the process described in subsection (a)(1) after the interim final regulations have been published and reasonable time has been provided for public comment.

(c) **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—A person may bring a civil action challenging an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project in a Federal district court only if the person has challenged the authorized hazardous fuel reduction project by exhausting—

(A) the administrative review process established by the Secretary of Agriculture under this section; or

(B) the administrative hearings and appeals procedures established by the Department of the Interior.

(2) **ISSUES.**—An issue may be considered in the judicial review of an action under section 106 only if the issue was raised in an administrative review process described in paragraph (1).

(3) **EXCEPTION.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—An exception to the requirement of exhausting the administrative review process before seeking judicial review shall be available if a Federal court finds that the futility or inadequacy exception applies to a specific plaintiff or claim.

(B) INFORMATION.—If an agency fails or is unable to make information timely available during the administrative review process, a court should evaluate whether the administrative review process was inadequate for claims or issues to which the information is material.

SEC. 106. [16 U.S.C. 6516] JUDICIAL REVIEW IN UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURTS.

(a) VENUE.—Notwithstanding section 1391 of title 28, United States Code, or other applicable law, an authorized hazardous fuels reduction project conducted under this title shall be subject to judicial review only in the United States district court for a district in which the Federal land to be treated under the authorized hazardous fuels reduction project is located.

(b) EXPEDITIOUS COMPLETION OF JUDICIAL REVIEW.—In the judicial review of an action challenging an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project under subsection (a), Congress encourages a court of competent jurisdiction to expedite, to the maximum extent practicable, the proceedings in the action with the goal of rendering a final determination on jurisdiction, and (if jurisdiction exists) a final determination on the merits, as soon as practicable after the date on which a complaint or appeal is filed to initiate the action.

(c) INJUNCTIONS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Subject to paragraph (2), the length of any preliminary injunctive relief and stays pending appeal covering an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project carried out under this title shall not exceed 60 days.

(2) RENEWAL.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—A court of competent jurisdiction may issue 1 or more renewals of any preliminary injunction, or stay pending appeal, granted under paragraph (1).

(B) UPDATES.—In each renewal of an injunction in an action, the parties to the action shall present the court with updated information on the status of the authorized hazardous fuel reduction project.

(3) BALANCING OF SHORT- AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS.—As part of its weighing the equities while considering any request for an injunction that applies to an agency action under an authorized hazardous fuel reduction project, the court reviewing the project shall balance the impact to the ecosystem likely affected by the project of—

(A) the short- and long-term effects of undertaking the agency action; against

(B) the short- and long-term effects of not undertaking the agency action.

SEC. 107. [16 U.S.C. 6517] EFFECT OF TITLE.

(a) OTHER AUTHORITY.—Nothing in this title affects, or otherwise biases, the use by the Secretary of other statutory or administrative authority (including categorical exclusions adopted to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)) to conduct a hazardous fuel reduction project on Federal land (including Federal land identified in section 102(d)) that is not conducted using the process authorized by section 104.

(b) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—For projects and activities of the National Forest System other than authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects, nothing in this title affects, or otherwise biases, the notice, comment, and appeal procedures for projects and activities of the National Forest System contained in part 215 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations, or the consideration or disposition of any legal action brought with respect to the procedures.

SEC. 108. [16 U.S.C. 6518] AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.

There is authorized to be appropriated \$660,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023 to carry out—

- (1) activities authorized by this title; and
- (2) other hazardous fuel reduction activities of the Secretary, including making grants to States, local governments, Indian tribes, and other eligible recipients for activities authorized by law.

TITLE II—BIOMASS

SEC. 201. IMPROVED BIOMASS USE RESEARCH PROGRAM.

【Omitted Amendment】

SEC. 202. RURAL REVITALIZATION THROUGH FORESTRY.

【Omitted Amendment】

【Section 203 was repealed by section 8403(a) of Public Law 115–334.】

TITLE III—WATERSHED FORESTRY ASSISTANCE

SEC. 301. [16 U.S.C. 6541] FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—

(1) there has been a dramatic shift in public attitudes and perceptions about forest management, particularly in the understanding and practice of sustainable forest management;

(2) it is commonly recognized that the proper stewardship of forest land is essential to sustaining and restoring the health of watersheds;

(3) forests can provide essential ecological services in filtering pollutants, buffering important rivers and estuaries, and minimizing flooding, which makes forest restoration worthy of special focus; and

(4) strengthened education, technical assistance, and financial assistance for nonindustrial private forest landowners and communities, relating to the protection of watershed health, is needed to realize the expectations of the general public.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this title are—

(1) to improve landowner and public understanding of the connection between forest management and watershed health;

(2) to encourage landowners to maintain tree cover on property and to use tree plantings and vegetative treatments

as creative solutions to watershed problems associated with varying land uses;

(3) to enhance and complement forest management and buffer use for watersheds, with an emphasis on community watersheds;

(4) to establish new partnerships and collaborative watershed approaches to forest management, stewardship, and conservation;

(5) to provide technical and financial assistance to States to deliver a coordinated program that enhances State forestry best-management practices programs, and conserves and improves forested land and potentially forested land, through technical, financial, and educational assistance to qualifying individuals and entities; and

(6) to maximize the proper management and conservation of wetland forests and to assist in the restoration of those forests.

SEC. 302. WATERSHED FORESTRY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

[Omitted Amendment]

SEC. 303. [16 U.S.C. 6542] WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **END WATER USER.**—The term “end water user” means a non-Federal entity, including—

- (A) a State;
- (B) a political subdivision of a State;
- (C) an Indian tribe;
- (D) a utility;
- (E) a municipal water system;
- (F) an irrigation district;
- (G) a nonprofit organization; and
- (H) a corporation.

(2) **FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY.**—The term “forest management activity” means a project carried out by the Secretary on National Forest System land.

(3) **FOREST PLAN.**—The term “forest plan” means a land management plan prepared by the Forest Service for a unit of the National Forest System pursuant to section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604).

(4) **NON-FEDERAL PARTNER.**—The term “non-Federal partner” means an end water user with whom the Secretary has entered into a partnership agreement under subsection (c)(1).

(5) **PROGRAM.**—The term “Program” means the Water Source Protection Program established under subsection (b).

(6) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service.

(7) **WATER SOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN.**—The term “water source management plan” means the water source management plan developed under subsection (d)(1).

(b) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary shall establish and maintain a program, to be known as the “Water Source Protection

gram”, to carry out watershed protection and restoration projects on National Forest System land.

(c) WATER SOURCE INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary may enter into water source investment partnership agreements with end water users to protect and restore the condition of National Forest watersheds that provide water to the end water users.

(2) FORM.—A partnership agreement described in paragraph (1) may take the form of—

- (A) a memorandum of understanding;
- (B) a cost-share or collection agreement;
- (C) a long-term funding matching commitment; or
- (D) another appropriate instrument, as determined by

the Secretary.

(d) WATER SOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary, in cooperation with the non-Federal partners and applicable State, local, and Tribal governments, may develop a water source management plan that describes the proposed implementation of watershed protection and restoration projects under the Program.

(2) REQUIREMENT.—A water source management plan shall be conducted in a manner consistent with the forest plan applicable to the National Forest System land on which the watershed protection and restoration project is carried out.

(3) ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS.—The Secretary may conduct a single environmental impact statement or similar analysis required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)—

- (A) for each watershed protection and restoration project included in the water source management plan; or
- (B) as part of the development of, or after the finalization of, the water source management plan.

(e) FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that forest management activities are necessary to protect, maintain, or enhance water quality, and in accordance with paragraph (2), the Secretary shall carry out forest management activities as part of watershed protection and restoration projects carried out on National Forest System land, with the primary purpose of—

- (A) protecting a municipal water supply system;
- (B) restoring forest health from insect infestations and disease; or
- (C) any combination of the purposes described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

(2) COMPLIANCE.—The Secretary shall carry out forest management activities under paragraph (1) in accordance with—

- (A) this Act;
- (B) the applicable water source management plan;
- (C) the applicable forest plan; and
- (D) other applicable laws.

(f) **ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT OF 1973.**—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary may use the Manual on Adaptive Management of the Department of the Interior, including any associated guidance, to comply with the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.).

(g) **FUNDS AND SERVICES.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary may accept and use funding, services, and other forms of investment and assistance from non-Federal partners to implement the water source management plan.

(2) **MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED.**—The Secretary shall require the contribution of funds or in-kind support from non-Federal partners to be in an amount that is at least equal to the amount of Federal funds.

(3) **MANNER OF USE.**—The Secretary may accept and use investments described in paragraph (1) directly or indirectly through the National Forest Foundation.

(4) **WATER SOURCE PROTECTION FUND.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations, the Secretary may establish a Water Source Protection Fund to match funds or in-kind support contributed by non-Federal partners under paragraph (1).

(B) **USE OF APPROPRIATED FUNDS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$10,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through 2023.

(C) **PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS.**—The Secretary may make multiyear commitments, if necessary, to implement 1 or more partnership agreements under subsection (c).

SEC. 304. [16 U.S.C. 6543] WATERSHED CONDITION FRAMEWORK.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service (referred to in this section as the “Secretary”), may establish and maintain a Watershed Condition Framework for National Forest System land—

(1) to evaluate and classify the condition of watersheds, taking into consideration—

(A) water quality and quantity;

(B) aquatic habitat and biota;

(C) riparian and wetland vegetation;

(D) the presence of roads and trails;

(E) soil type and condition;

(F) groundwater-dependent ecosystems;

(G) relevant terrestrial indicators, such as fire regime, risk of catastrophic fire, forest and rangeland vegetation, invasive species, and insects and disease; and

(H) other significant factors, as determined by the Secretary;

(2) to identify for protection and restoration up to 5 priority watersheds in each National Forest, and up to 2 priority watersheds in each national grassland, taking into consideration the impact of the condition of the watershed condition on—

(A) wildfire behavior;

(B) flood risk;

- (C) fish and wildlife;
 - (D) drinking water supplies;
 - (E) irrigation water supplies;
 - (F) forest-dependent communities; and
 - (G) other significant impacts, as determined by the Secretary;
- (3) to develop a watershed protection and restoration action plan for each priority watershed that—
- (A) takes into account existing restoration activities being implemented in the watershed; and
 - (B) includes, at a minimum—
 - (i) the major stressors responsible for the impaired condition of the watershed;
 - (ii) a set of essential projects that, once completed, will address the identified stressors and improve watershed conditions;
 - (iii) a proposed implementation schedule;
 - (iv) potential partners and funding sources; and
 - (v) a monitoring and evaluation program;
- (4) to prioritize protection and restoration activities for each watershed restoration action plan;
- (5) to implement each watershed protection and restoration action plan; and
- (6) to monitor the effectiveness of protection and restoration actions and indicators of watershed health.
- (b) COORDINATION.—In carrying out subsection (a), the Secretary shall—
- (1) coordinate with interested non-Federal landowners and State, Tribal, and local governments within the relevant watershed; and
 - (2) provide for an active and ongoing public engagement process.
- (c) EMERGENCY DESIGNATION.—Notwithstanding paragraph (2) of subsection (a), the Secretary may identify a watershed as a priority for rehabilitation in the Watershed Condition Framework without using the process described in that subsection if a Forest Supervisor determines that—
- (1) a wildfire has significantly diminished the condition of the watershed; and
 - (2) the emergency stabilization activities of the Burned Area Emergency Response Team are insufficient to return the watershed to proper function.

TITLE IV—INSECT INFESTATIONS AND RELATED DISEASES

SEC. 401. [16 U.S.C. 6551] FINDINGS AND PURPOSE.

- (a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds that—
- (1) high levels of tree mortality resulting from insect infestation (including the interaction between insects and diseases) may result in—
 - (A) increased fire risk;
 - (B) loss of old trees and old growth;

- (C) loss of threatened and endangered species;
 - (D) loss of species diversity;
 - (E) degraded watershed conditions;
 - (F) increased potential for damage from other agents of disturbance, including exotic, invasive species; and
 - (G) decreased timber values;
- (2)(A) forest-damaging insects destroy hundreds of thousands of acres of trees each year;
- (B) in the West, more than 21,000,000 acres are at high risk of forest-damaging insect infestation, and in the South, more than 57,000,000 acres are at risk across all land ownerships; and
- (C) severe drought conditions in many areas of the South and West will increase the risk of forest-damaging insect infestations;
- (3) the hemlock woolly adelgid is—
- (A) destroying streamside forests throughout the mid-Atlantic and Appalachian regions;
 - (B) threatening water quality and sensitive aquatic species; and
 - (C) posing a potential threat to valuable commercial timber land in northern New England;
- (4)(A) the emerald ash borer is a nonnative, invasive pest that has quickly become a major threat to hardwood forests because an emerald ash borer infestation is almost always fatal to affected trees; and
- (B) the emerald ash borer pest threatens to destroy more than 692,000,000 ash trees in forests in Michigan and Ohio alone, and between 5 and 10 percent of urban street trees in the Upper Midwest;
- (5)(A) epidemic populations of Southern pine beetles are ravaging forests in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia; and
- (B) in 2001, Florida and Kentucky experienced 146 percent and 111 percent increases, respectively, in Southern pine beetle populations;
- (6) those epidemic outbreaks of Southern pine beetles have forced private landowners to harvest dead and dying trees, in rural areas and increasingly urbanized settings;
- (7) according to the Forest Service, recent outbreaks of the red oak borer in Arkansas and Missouri have been unprecedented, with more than 1,000,000 acres infested at population levels never seen before;
- (8) much of the damage from the red oak borer has taken place in national forests, and the Federal response has been inadequate to protect forest ecosystems and other ecological and economic resources;
- (9)(A) previous silvicultural assessments, while useful and informative, have been limited in scale and scope of application; and
- (B) there have not been sufficient resources available to adequately test a full array of individual and combined applied silvicultural assessments;

(10) only through the full funding, development, and assessment of potential applied silvicultural assessments over specific time frames across an array of environmental and climatic conditions can the most innovative and cost effective management applications be determined that will help reduce the susceptibility of forest ecosystems to attack by forest pests;

(11)(A) often, there are significant interactions between insects and diseases;

(B) many diseases (such as white pine blister rust, beech bark disease, and many other diseases) can weaken trees and forest stands and predispose trees and forest stands to insect attack; and

(C) certain diseases are spread using insects as vectors (including Dutch elm disease and pine pitch canker); and

(12) funding and implementation of an initiative to combat forest pest infestations and associated diseases should not come at the expense of supporting other programs and initiatives of the Secretary.

(b) PURPOSES.—The purposes of this title are—

(1) to require the Secretary to develop an accelerated basic and applied assessment program to combat infestations by forest-damaging insects and associated diseases;

(2) to enlist the assistance of colleges and universities (including forestry schools, land grant colleges and universities, and 1890 Institutions), State agencies, and private landowners to carry out the program; and

(3) to carry out applied silvicultural assessments.

SEC. 402. [16 U.S.C. 6552] DEFINITIONS.

In this title:

(1) APPLIED SILVICULTURAL ASSESSMENT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “applied silvicultural assessment” means any vegetative or other treatment carried out for information gathering and research purposes.

(B) INCLUSIONS.—The term “applied silvicultural assessment” includes timber harvesting, thinning, prescribed burning, pruning, and any combination of those activities.

(2) 1890 INSTITUTION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “1890 Institution” means a college or university that is eligible to receive funds under the Act of August 30, 1890 (7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.).

(B) INCLUSION.—The term “1890 Institution” includes Tuskegee University.

(3) FOREST-DAMAGING INSECT.—The term “forest-damaging insect” means—

- (A) a Southern pine beetle;
- (B) a mountain pine beetle;
- (C) a spruce bark beetle;
- (D) a gypsy moth;
- (E) a hemlock woolly adelgid;
- (F) an emerald ash borer;
- (G) a red oak borer;
- (H) a white oak borer; and

(I) such other insects as may be identified by the Secretary.

(4) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Forest Service, with respect to National Forest System land; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, acting through appropriate offices of the United States Geological Survey, with respect to federally owned land administered by the Secretary of the Interior.

SEC. 403. [16 U.S.C. 6553] ACCELERATED INFORMATION GATHERING REGARDING FOREST-DAMAGING INSECTS.

(a) INFORMATION GATHERING.—The Secretary, acting through the Forest Service and United States Geological Survey, as appropriate, shall establish an accelerated program—

(1) to plan, conduct, and promote comprehensive and systematic information gathering on forest-damaging insects and associated diseases, including an evaluation of—

(A) infestation prevention and suppression methods;

(B) effects of infestations and associated disease interactions on forest ecosystems;

(C) restoration of forest ecosystem efforts;

(D) utilization options regarding infested trees; and

(E) models to predict the occurrence, distribution, and impact of outbreaks of forest-damaging insects and associated diseases;

(2) to assist land managers in the development of treatments and strategies to improve forest health and reduce the susceptibility of forest ecosystems to severe infestations of forest-damaging insects and associated diseases on Federal land and State and private land; and

(3) to disseminate the results of the information gathering, treatments, and strategies.

(b) COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE.—The Secretary shall—

(1) establish and carry out the program in cooperation with—

(A) scientists from colleges and universities (including forestry schools, land grant colleges and universities, and 1890 Institutions);

(B) Federal, State, and local agencies; and

(C) private and industrial landowners; and

(2) designate such colleges and universities to assist in carrying out the program.

SEC. 404. [16 U.S.C. 6554] APPLIED SILVICULTURAL ASSESSMENTS.

(a) ASSESSMENT EFFORTS.—For information gathering and research purposes, the Secretary may conduct applied silvicultural assessments on Federal land that the Secretary determines is at risk of infestation by, or is infested with, forest-damaging insects.

(b) LIMITATIONS.—

(1) EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN AREAS.—Subsection (a) does not apply to—

(A) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System;

- (B) any Federal land on which, by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited;
- (C) a congressionally-designated wilderness study area; or
- (D) an area in which activities under subsection (a) would be inconsistent with the applicable land and resource management plan.
- (2) CERTAIN TREATMENT PROHIBITED.—Nothing in subsection (a) authorizes the application of insecticides in municipal watersheds or associated riparian areas.
- (3) PEER REVIEW.—
- (A) IN GENERAL.—Before being carried out, each applied silvicultural assessment under this title shall be peer reviewed by scientific experts selected by the Secretary, which shall include non-Federal experts.
- (B) EXISTING PEER REVIEW PROCESSES.—The Secretary may use existing peer review processes to the extent the processes comply with subparagraph (A).
- (c) PUBLIC NOTICE AND COMMENT.—
- (1) PUBLIC NOTICE.—The Secretary shall provide notice of each applied silvicultural assessment proposed to be carried out under this section.
- (2) PUBLIC COMMENT.—The Secretary shall provide an opportunity for public comment before carrying out an applied silviculture assessment under this section.
- (d) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—Applied silvicultural assessment and research treatments carried out under this section on not more than 1,000 acres for an assessment or treatment may be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement and environmental assessment under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).
- (2) ADMINISTRATION.—Applied silvicultural assessments and research treatments categorically excluded under paragraph (1)—
- (A) shall not be carried out in an area that is adjacent to another area that is categorically excluded under paragraph (1) that is being treated with similar methods; and
- (B) shall be subject to the extraordinary circumstances procedures established by the Secretary pursuant to section 1508.4 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations.
- (3) MAXIMUM CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—The total number of acres categorically excluded under paragraph (1) shall not exceed 250,000 acres.
- (4) NO ADDITIONAL FINDINGS REQUIRED.—In accordance with paragraph (1), the Secretary shall not be required to make any findings as to whether an applied silvicultural assessment project, either individually or cumulatively, has a significant effect on the environment.

SEC. 405. [16 U.S.C. 6555] RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.

The authority provided to each Secretary under this title is supplemental to, and not in lieu of, any authority provided to the Secretaries under any other law.

SEC. 406. [16 U.S.C. 6556] TERMINATION OF EFFECTIVENESS.

The authority provided by this title terminates effective October 1, 2023.

TITLE V—HEALTHY FORESTS RESERVE PROGRAM

SEC. 501. [16 U.S.C. 6571] ESTABLISHMENT OF HEALTHY FORESTS RESERVE PROGRAM.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall establish the healthy forests reserve program for the purpose of restoring and enhancing forest ecosystems—

- (1) to promote the recovery of threatened and endangered species;
- (2) to improve biodiversity;
- (3) to conserve forest land that provides habitat for species described in section 502(b); and
- (4) to enhance carbon sequestration.

(b) **COORDINATION.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out the healthy forests reserve program in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce.

SEC. 502. [16 U.S.C. 6572] ELIGIBILITY AND ENROLLMENT OF LANDS IN PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce, shall describe and define forest ecosystems that are eligible for enrollment in the healthy forests reserve program.

(b) **ELIGIBILITY.**—To be eligible for enrollment in the healthy forests reserve program, land shall be private forest land, or private land being restored to forest land, the enrollment of which will maintain, restore, enhance, or otherwise measurably—

- (1) increase the likelihood of recovery of a species that is listed as endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); or
- (2) improve the well-being of a species that—
 - (A) is—
 - (i) not listed as endangered or threatened under such section; and
 - (ii) a candidate for such listing, a State-listed species, or a special concern species; or
 - (B) is deemed a species of greatest conservation need by a State wildlife action plan.

(c) **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS.**—In enrolling land that satisfies the criteria under subsection (b), the Secretary of Agriculture shall give additional consideration to land the enrollment of which will—

- (1) improve biological diversity;
- (2) conserve forest land that provides habitat for species described in subsection (b); and

- (3) increase carbon sequestration.
- (d) ENROLLMENT BY WILLING OWNERS.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall enroll land in the healthy forests reserve program only with the consent of the owner of the land.
- (e) METHODS OF ENROLLMENT.—
- (1) AUTHORIZED METHODS.—Land may be enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program in accordance with—
- (A) a 10-year cost-share agreement;
 - (B) a 30-year easement; or
 - (C)(i) a permanent easement; or
 - (ii) in a State that imposes a maximum duration for easements, an easement for the maximum duration allowed under State law.
- (2) ACREAGE OWNED BY INDIAN TRIBES.—
- (A) DEFINITION OF ACREAGE OWNED BY INDIAN TRIBES.—In this paragraph, the term “acreage owned by Indian tribes” includes—
- (i) land that is held in trust by the United States for Indian tribes or individual Indians;
 - (ii) land, the title to which is held by Indian tribes or individual Indians subject to Federal restrictions against alienation or encumbrance;
 - (iii) land that is subject to rights of use, occupancy, and benefit of certain Indian tribes;
 - (iv) land that is held in fee title by an Indian tribe; or
 - (v) land that is owned by a native corporation formed under section 17 of the Act of June 18, 1934 (commonly known as the “Indian Reorganization Act”) (25 U.S.C. 477) or section 8 of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. 1607); or
 - (vi) a combination of 1 or more types of land described in clauses (i) through (v).
- (B) ENROLLMENT OF ACREAGE.—In the case of acreage owned by an Indian tribe, the Secretary may enroll acreage into the healthy forests reserve program through the use of—
- (i) a 30-year contract (the value of which shall be equivalent to the value of a 30-year easement);
 - (ii) a 10-year cost-share agreement;
 - (iii) a permanent easement; or
 - (iv) any combination of the options described in clauses (i) through (iii).
- (f) ENROLLMENT PRIORITY.—
- (1) SPECIES.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall give priority to the enrollment of land that provides the greatest conservation benefit to—
- (A) primarily, species listed as endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); and
 - (B) secondarily, species that—
 - (i) are not listed as endangered or threatened under section 4 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1533); but

(ii)(I) are candidates for such listing, State-listed species, or special concern species; or

(II) are deemed a species of greatest conservation need under a State wildlife action plan.

(2) COST-EFFECTIVENESS.—The Secretary of Agriculture shall also consider the cost-effectiveness of each agreement or easement, and associated restoration plans, so as to maximize the environmental benefits per dollar expended.

(g) EASEMENT MODIFICATION OR TERMINATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may modify or terminate an easement or other interest in land administered by the Secretary under this title if—

(A) the owner of the land agrees to the modification or termination; and

(B) the Secretary determines that the modification or termination—

(i) will address a compelling public need for which there is no practicable alternative; and

(ii) is in the public interest.

(2) CONSIDERATION; CONDITIONS.—

(A) TERMINATION.—As consideration for termination of an easement or other interest in land under this subsection, the Secretary shall enter into a compensatory arrangement, as the Secretary determines to be appropriate.

(B) MODIFICATION.—In the case of a modification of an easement or other interest in land under this subsection—

(i) as a condition of the modification, the owner of the land shall enter into a compensatory arrangement, as the Secretary determines to be appropriate, to incur the costs of modification; and

(ii) the Secretary shall ensure that—

(I) the modification will not adversely affect the forest ecosystem functions and values for which the easement or other interest in land was acquired;

(II) any adverse impacts will be mitigated by enrollment and restoration of other land that provides greater forest ecosystem functions and values at no additional cost to the Federal Government; and

(III) the modification will result in equal or greater environmental and economic values to the United States.

SEC. 503. [16 U.S.C. 6573] RESTORATION PLANS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Land enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program shall be subject to a restoration plan, to be developed jointly by the landowner and the Secretary of Agriculture, in coordination with the Secretary of the Interior.

(b) PRACTICES.—The restoration plan shall require such restoration practices and measures as are necessary to restore and enhance habitat for species described in section 502(b), including the following:

(1) Land management practices.

- (2) Vegetative treatments.
- (3) Structural practices and measures.
- (4) Practices to increase carbon sequestration.
- (5) Practices to improve biological diversity.
- (6) Other practices and measures.

SEC. 504. [16 U.S.C. 6574] FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **PERMANENT EASEMENTS.**—In the case of land enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program using a permanent easement (or an easement described in section 502(f)(1)(C)(ii)), the Secretary of Agriculture shall pay the owner of the land an amount equal to not less than 75 percent, nor more than 100 percent, of (as determined by the Secretary)—

(1) the fair market value of the enrolled land during the period the land is subject to the easement, less the fair market value of the land encumbered by the easement; and

(2) the actual costs of the approved conservation practices or the average cost of approved practices carried out on the land during the period in which the land is subject to the easement.

(b) **THIRTY-YEAR EASEMENT.**—In the case of land enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program using a 30-year easement, the Secretary of Agriculture shall pay the owner of the land an amount equal to not more than (as determined by the Secretary)—

(1) 75 percent of the fair market value of the land, less the fair market value of the land encumbered by the easement; and

(2) 75 percent of the actual costs of the approved conservation practices or 75 percent of the average cost of approved practices.

(c) **TEN-YEAR AGREEMENT.**—In the case of land enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program using a 10-year cost-share agreement, the Secretary of Agriculture shall pay the owner of the land an amount equal to not more than (as determined by the Secretary)—

(1) fifty percent of the actual costs of the approved conservation practices; or

(2) fifty percent of the average cost of approved practices.

(d) **ACCEPTANCE OF CONTRIBUTIONS.**—The Secretary of Agriculture may accept and use contributions of non-Federal funds to make payments under this section.

SEC. 505. [16 U.S.C. 6575] TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall provide landowners with technical assistance to assist the owners in complying with the terms of plans (as included in agreements or easements) under the healthy forests reserve program.

(b) **TECHNICAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.**—The Secretary of Agriculture may request the services of, and enter into cooperative agreements with, individuals or entities certified as technical service providers under section 1242 of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3842), to assist the Secretary in providing technical assistance necessary to develop and implement the healthy forests reserve program.

SEC. 506. [16 U.S.C. 6576] PROTECTIONS AND MEASURES.

(a) **PROTECTIONS.**—In the case of a landowner that enrolls land in the program and whose conservation activities result in a net conservation benefit for listed, candidate, or other species, the Secretary of Agriculture shall make available to the landowner safe harbor or similar assurances and protection under—

(1) section 7(b)(4) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(b)(4)); or

(2) section 10(a)(1) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 1539(a)(1)).

(b) **MEASURES.**—If protection under subsection (a) requires the taking of measures that are in addition to the measures covered by the applicable restoration plan agreed to under section 503, the cost of the additional measures, as well as the cost of any permit, shall be considered part of the restoration plan for purposes of financial assistance under section 504.

SEC. 507. [16 U.S.C. 6577] INVOLVEMENT BY OTHER AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS.

In carrying out this title, the Secretary of Agriculture may consult with—

- (1) nonindustrial private forest landowners;
- (2) other Federal agencies;
- (3) State fish and wildlife agencies;
- (4) State forestry agencies;
- (5) State environmental quality agencies;
- (6) other State conservation agencies; and
- (7) nonprofit conservation organizations.

SEC. 508. [16 U.S.C. 6578] FUNDING.

(a) **FISCAL YEARS 2009 THROUGH 2013.**—Of the funds of the Commodity Credit Corporation, the Secretary of Agriculture shall make available \$9,750,000 for each of fiscal years 2009 through 2012 to carry out this title.

(b) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of Agriculture to carry out this section \$12,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2014 through 2023.

(c) **ADDITIONAL SOURCE OF FUNDS.**—In addition to funds appropriated pursuant to the authorization of appropriations in subsection (b) for a fiscal year, the Secretary may use such amount of the funds appropriated for that fiscal year to carry out the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act (16 U.S.C. 590a et seq.) as the Secretary determines necessary to cover the cost of technical assistance, management, and enforcement responsibilities for land enrolled in the healthy forests reserve program pursuant to subsections (a) and (b) of section 504.

(d) **DURATION OF AVAILABILITY.**—The funds made available under subsection (a) shall remain available until expended.

TITLE VI—MISCELLANEOUS

SEC. 601. [16 U.S.C. 6591] FOREST STANDS INVENTORY AND MONITORING PROGRAM TO IMPROVE DETECTION OF AND RESPONSE TO ENVIRONMENTAL THREATS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture shall carry out a comprehensive program to inventory, monitor, characterize, as-

sess, and identify forest stands (with emphasis on hardwood forest stands) and potential forest stands—

(1) in units of the National Forest System (other than those units created from the public domain); and

(2) on private forest land, with the consent of the owner of the land.

(b) **ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED.**—In carrying out the program, the Secretary shall address issues including—

(1) early detection, identification, and assessment of environmental threats (including insect, disease, invasive species, fire, and weather-related risks and other episodic events);

(2) loss or degradation of forests;

(3) degradation of the quality forest stands caused by inadequate forest regeneration practices;

(4) quantification of carbon uptake rates; and

(5) management practices that focus on preventing further forest degradation.

(c) **EARLY WARNING SYSTEM.**—In carrying out the program, the Secretary shall develop a comprehensive early warning system for potential catastrophic environmental threats to forests to increase the likelihood that forest managers will be able to—

(1) isolate and treat a threat before the threat gets out of control; and

(2) prevent epidemics, such as the American chestnut blight in the first half of the twentieth century, that could be environmentally and economically devastating to forests.

(d) **AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**—There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section \$5,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2004 through 2008.

SEC. 602. [16 U.S.C. 6591a] DESIGNATION OF TREATMENT AREAS.

(a) **DEFINITION OF DECLINING FOREST HEALTH.**—In this section, the term “declining forest health” means a forest that is experiencing—

(1) substantially increased tree mortality due to insect or disease infestation; or

(2) dieback due to infestation or defoliation by insects or disease.

(b) **DESIGNATION OF TREATMENT AREAS.**—

(1) **INITIAL AREAS.**—Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of the Agricultural Act of 2014, the Secretary shall, if requested by the Governor of the State, designate as part of an insect and disease treatment program 1 or more landscape-scale areas, such as subwatersheds (sixth-level hydrologic units, according to the System of Hydrologic Unit Codes of the United States Geological Survey), in at least 1 national forest in each State that is experiencing an insect or disease epidemic.

(2) **ADDITIONAL AREAS.**—After the end of the 60-day period described in paragraph (1), the Secretary may designate additional landscape-scale areas under this section as needed to address insect or disease threats.

(c) **REQUIREMENTS.**—To be designated a landscape-scale area under subsection (b), the area shall be—

(1) experiencing declining forest health, based on annual forest health surveys conducted by the Secretary;

(2) at risk of experiencing substantially increased tree mortality over the next 15 years due to insect or disease infestation, based on the most recent National Insect and Disease Risk Map published by the Forest Service; or

(3) in an area in which the risk of hazard trees poses an imminent risk to public infrastructure, health, or safety.

(d) TREATMENT OF AREAS.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may carry out priority projects on Federal land in the areas designated under subsection (b)—

(A) to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, insect or disease infestation; or

(B) to reduce hazardous fuels.

(2) AUTHORITY.—Any project under paragraph (1) for which a public notice to initiate scoping is issued on or before September 30, 2023, may be carried out in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d) of section 102, and sections 104, 105, and 106.

(3) EFFECT.—Projects carried out under this subsection shall be considered authorized hazardous fuel reduction projects for purposes of the authorities described in paragraph (2).

(4) REPORT.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—In accordance with the schedule described in subparagraph (B), the Secretary shall issue 2 reports on actions taken to carry out this subsection, including—

(i) an evaluation of the progress towards project goals; and

(ii) recommendations for modifications to the projects and management treatments.

(B) SCHEDULE.—The Secretary shall—

(i) not earlier than September 30, 2018, issue the initial report under subparagraph (A); and

(ii) not earlier than September 30, 2024, issue the second report under that subparagraph.

(e) TREE RETENTION.—The Secretary shall carry out projects under subsection (d) in a manner that maximizes the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease.

SEC. 603. [16 U.S.C. 6591b] ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subsection (d), a project described in subsection (b) that is conducted in accordance with section 602(d) may be—

(1) considered an action categorically excluded from the requirements of Public Law 91–190 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(2) exempt from the special administrative review process under section 105.

(b) COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION PROJECT.—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—A project referred to in subsection (a) is a project to carry out forest restoration treatments that—

(A) maximizes the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease;

(B) considers the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity; and

(C) is developed and implemented through a collaborative process that—

(i) includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests; and

(ii) (I) is transparent and nonexclusive; or

(II) meets the requirements for a resource advisory committee under subsections (c) through (f) of section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125).

(2) **INCLUSION.**—A project under this subsection may carry out part of a proposal that complies with the eligibility requirements of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program under section 4003(b) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303(b)).

(c) **LIMITATIONS.**—

(1) **PROJECT SIZE.**—A project under this section may not exceed 3000 acres.

(2) **LOCATION.**—A project under this section shall be limited to areas—

(A) in the wildland-urban interface; or

(B) Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III, outside the wildland-urban interface.

(3) **ROADS.**—

(A) **PERMANENT ROADS.**—

(i) **PROHIBITION ON ESTABLISHMENT.**—A project under this section shall not include the establishment of permanent roads.

(ii) **EXISTING ROADS.**—The Secretary may carry out necessary maintenance and repairs on existing permanent roads for the purposes of this section.

(B) **TEMPORARY ROADS.**—The Secretary shall decommission any temporary road constructed under a project under this section not later than 3 years after the date on which the project is completed.

(d) **EXCLUSIONS.**—This section does not apply to—

(1) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(2) any Federal land on which, by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited;

(3) a congressionally designated wilderness study area; or

(4) an area in which activities under subsection (a) would be inconsistent with the applicable land and resource management plan.

(e) **FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS.**—All projects and activities carried out under this section shall be consistent with the land and resource management plan established under section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604) for the unit of the National Forest System containing the projects and activities.

(f) **PUBLIC NOTICE AND SCOPING.**—The Secretary shall conduct public notice and scoping for any project or action proposed in accordance with this section.

(g) **ACCOUNTABILITY.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary shall prepare an annual report on the use of categorical exclusions under this section that includes a description of all acres (or other appropriate unit) treated through projects carried out under this section.

(2) **SUBMISSION.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit the reports required under paragraph (1) to—

(A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives;

(D) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(E) the Government Accountability Office.

SEC. 604. [16 U.S.C. 6591c] STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING PROJECTS.

(a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section:

(1) **CHIEF.**—The term “Chief” means the Chief of the Forest Service.

(2) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the Bureau of Land Management.

(b) **PROJECTS.**—The Chief and the Director, via agreement or contract as appropriate, may enter into stewardship contracting projects with private persons or other public or private entities to perform services to achieve land management goals for the national forests and the public lands that meet local and rural community needs.

(c) **LAND MANAGEMENT GOALS.**—The land management goals of a project under subsection (b) may include any of the following:

(1) Road and trail maintenance or obliteration to restore or maintain water quality.

(2) Soil productivity, habitat for wildlife and fisheries, or other resource values.

(3) Setting of prescribed fires to improve the composition, structure, condition, and health of stands or to improve wildlife habitat.

(4) Removing vegetation or other activities to promote healthy forest stands, reduce fire hazards, or achieve other land management objectives.

(5) Watershed restoration and maintenance.

(6) Restoration and maintenance of wildlife and fish.

(7) Control of noxious and exotic weeds and reestablishing native plant species.

(d) AGREEMENTS OR CONTRACTS.—

(1) PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE.—A source for performance of an agreement or contract under subsection (b) shall be selected on a best-value basis, including consideration of source under other public and private agreements or contracts.

(2) CONTRACT FOR SALE OF PROPERTY.—A contract entered into under this section may, at the discretion of the Secretary of Agriculture, be considered a contract for the sale of property under such terms as the Secretary may prescribe without regard to any other provision of law.

(3) TERM.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in subparagraph (B), the Chief and the Director may enter into a contract under subsection (b) in accordance with section 3903 of title 41, United States Code.

(B) MAXIMUM.—The period of the contract under subsection (b) may exceed 5 years but may not exceed 10 years.

(4) OFFSETS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may apply the value of timber or other forest products removed as an offset against the cost of services received under the agreement or contract described in subsection (b).

(B) METHODS OF APPRAISAL.—The value of timber or other forest products used as an offset under subparagraph (A)—

(i) shall be determined using appropriate methods of appraisal commensurate with the quantity of products to be removed; and

(ii) may—

(I) be determined using a unit of measure appropriate to the contracts; and

(II) may include valuing products on a per-acre basis.

(5) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—Notwithstanding subsections (d) and (g) of section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a), the Chief may enter into an agreement or contract under subsection (b). Notwithstanding the Materials Act of 1947 (30 U.S.C. 602(a)), the Director may enter into an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

(6) CONTRACTING OFFICER.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary or the Secretary of the Interior may determine the appropriate contracting officer to enter into and administer an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

(7) FIRE LIABILITY PROVISIONS.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this section, the Chief shall issue for use in all contracts and agreements under this section fire liability provisions that are in substantially the same form as the fire liability provisions contained in—

- (A) integrated resource timber contracts, as described in the Forest Service contract numbered 2400-13, part H, section H.4; and
- (B) timber sale contracts conducted pursuant to section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a).
- (e) RECEIPTS.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may collect monies from an agreement or contract under subsection (b) if the collection is a secondary objective of negotiating the contract that will best achieve the purposes of this section.
- (2) USE.—Monies from an agreement or contract under subsection (b)—
- (A) may be retained by the Chief and the Director; and
- (B) shall be available for expenditure without further appropriation at the project site from which the monies are collected or at another project site.
- (3) RELATION TO OTHER LAWS.—
- (A) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the value of services received by the Chief or the Director under a stewardship contract project conducted under this section, and any payments made or resources provided by the contractor, Chief, or Director shall not be considered monies received from the National Forest System or the public lands.
- (B) KNUTSON-VANDERBERG ACT.—The Act of June 9, 1930 (commonly known as the “Knutson-Vanderberg Act”) (16 U.S.C. 576 et seq.) shall not apply to any agreement or contract under subsection (b).
- (f) COSTS OF REMOVAL.—Notwithstanding the fact that a contractor did not harvest the timber, the Chief may collect deposits from a contractor covering the costs of removal of timber or other forest products under—
- (1) the Act of August 11, 1916 (16 U.S.C. 490); and
- (2) the Act of June 30, 1914 (16 U.S.C. 498).
- (g) PERFORMANCE AND PAYMENT GUARANTEES.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—The Chief and the Director may require performance and payment bonds under sections 28.103-2 and 28.103-3 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, in an amount that the contracting officer considers sufficient to protect the investment in receipts by the Federal Government generated by the contractor from the estimated value of the forest products to be removed under a contract under subsection (b).
- (2) EXCESS OFFSET VALUE.—If the offset value of the forest products exceeds the value of the resource improvement treatments, the Chief and the Director may—
- (A) use the excess to satisfy any outstanding liabilities for cancelled agreements or contracts; or
- (B) if there are no outstanding liabilities described in subparagraph (A), apply the excess to other authorized stewardship projects.
- (h) CANCELLATION CEILINGS.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding section 3903(b)(1) of title 41, United States Code, the Chief and the Director may

obligate funds in stages that are economically or programmatically viable to cover any potential cancellation or termination costs for an agreement or contract under subsection (b).

(2) **ADVANCE NOTICE TO CONGRESS OF CANCELLATION CEILING IN EXCESS OF \$25,000,000.**—Not later than 30 days before entering into a multiyear agreement or contract under subsection (b) that includes a cancellation ceiling in excess of \$25,000,000, but does not include proposed funding for the costs of cancelling the agreement or contract up to that cancellation ceiling, the Chief or the Director, as applicable, shall submit to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources and the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives a written notice that includes—

(A) a description of the cancellation ceiling amounts proposed for each program year in the agreement or contract;

(B) the reasons why the cancellation ceiling amounts described under subparagraph (A) were selected;

(C) a description of the extent to which the costs of contract cancellation are not included in the budget for the agreement or contract; and

(D) an assessment of the financial risk of not including budgeting for the costs of agreement or contract cancellation.

(3) **TRANSMITTAL OF NOTICE TO OMB.**—Not later than 14 days after the date on which written notice is provided under paragraph (2), the Chief or the Director, as appropriate, shall transmit a copy of the notice to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

(i) **MONITORING AND EVALUATION.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Chief and the Director shall establish a multiparty monitoring and evaluation process that accesses the stewardship contracting projects conducted under this section.

(2) **PARTICIPANTS.**—Other than the Chief and Director, participants in the process described in paragraph (1) may include—

(A) any cooperating governmental agencies, including tribal governments; and

(B) any other interested groups or individuals.

(j) **REPORTING.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and annually thereafter, the Chief and the Director shall submit to the congressional committees described in subsection (h)(2) a report on—

(1) the status of development, execution, and administration of agreements or contracts under subsection (b);

(2) the specific accomplishments that have resulted; and

(3) the role of local communities in the development of agreements or contract plans.

SEC. 605. [16 U.S.C. 6591d] WILDFIRE RESILIENCE PROJECTS.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—Hazardous fuels reduction projects, as defined in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511(2)) may be—

(1) carried out in accordance with subsections (b), (c), and (d) of section 102 and sections 104 and 105;

(2) considered an action categorically excluded from the requirements of Public Law 91–190 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.); and

(3) exempt from the special administrative review process under section 105.

(b) **COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION PROJECT**—

(1) **IN GENERAL**—A project referred to in subsection (a) is a project to carry out forest restoration treatments that—

(A) maximizes the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type, to the extent that the trees promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease, and reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, wildfires;

(B) considers the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity; and

(C) is developed and implemented through a collaborative process that—

(i) includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests; and

(ii)(I) is transparent and nonexclusive; or

(II) meets the requirements for a resource advisory committee under subsections (c) through (f) of section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125).

(2) **INCLUSION**—A project under this subsection may carry out part of a proposal that complies with the eligibility requirements of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program under section 4003(b) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303(b)).

(c) **LIMITATIONS**—

(1) **PROJECT SIZE**—A project under this section may not exceed 3000 acres.

(2) **LOCATION**—A project under this section shall be—

(A) Prioritized within the wildland-urban interface;

(B) If located outside the wildland-urban interface, limited to areas within Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III that contain very high wildfire hazard potential; and

(C) Limited to areas designated under section 602(b) as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(3) **ROADS**—

(A) **PERMANENT ROADS**—

(i) **PROHIBITION ON ESTABLISHMENT**—A project under this section shall not include the establishment of permanent roads.

(ii) EXISTING ROADS—The Secretary may carry out necessary maintenance and repairs on existing permanent roads for the purposes of this section.

(B) TEMPORARY ROADS—The Secretary shall decommission any temporary road constructed under a project under this section not later than 3 years after the date on which the project is completed.

(4) EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES—The Secretary shall apply the extraordinary circumstances procedures under section 220.6 of title 36,²code of Federal regulations (or successor regulations), when using the categorical exclusion under this section.

(d) EXCLUSIONS—This section does not apply to—

(1) a component of the National Wilderness Preservation System;

(2) any Federal land on which, by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited;

(3) a congressionally designated wilderness study area; or

(4) an area in which activities under subsection (a) would be inconsistent with the applicable land and resource management plan.

(e) FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS—All projects and activities carried out under this section shall be consistent with the land and resource management plan established under section 6 of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604) for the unit of the National Forest System containing the projects and activities.

(f) PUBLIC NOTICE AND SCOPING—The Secretary shall conduct public notice and scoping for any project or action proposed in accordance with this section.

(g) ACCOUNTABILITY—

(1) IN GENERAL—The Secretary shall prepare an annual report on the use of categorical exclusions under this section that includes a description of all acres (or other appropriate unit) treated through projects carried out under this section.

(2) SUBMISSION—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, and each year thereafter, the Secretary shall submit the reports required under paragraph (1) to—

(A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Environment and Public Works of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representatives;

(D) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives; and

(E) the Government Accountability Office.

SEC. 606. [16 U.S.C. 6591e] CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AND MULE DEER HABITAT.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

²So in law. The reference to “code of Federal regulations” should be a reference to “Code of Federal Regulations”.

(1) COVERED VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The term “covered vegetation management activity” means any activity described in subparagraph (B) that—

(i)(I) is carried out on National Forest System land administered by the Forest Service; or

(II) is carried out on public land administered by the Bureau of Land Management;

(ii) with respect to public land, meets the objectives of the order of the Secretary of the Interior numbered 3336 and dated January 5, 2015;

(iii) conforms to an applicable forest plan or land use plan;

(iv) protects, restores, or improves greater sage-grouse or mule deer habitat in a sagebrush steppe ecosystem as described in—

(I) Circular 1416 of the United States Geological Survey entitled “Restoration Handbook for Sagebrush Steppe Ecosystems with Emphasis on Greater Sage-Grouse Habitat—Part 1. Concepts for Understanding and Applying Restoration” (2015); or

(II) the habitat guidelines for mule deer published by the Mule Deer Working Group of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies;

(v) will not permanently impair—

(I) the natural state of the treated area;

(II) outstanding opportunities for solitude;

(III) outstanding opportunities for primitive, unconfined recreation;

(IV) economic opportunities consistent with multiple-use management; or

(V) the identified values of a unit of the National Landscape Conservation System;

(vi)(I) restores native vegetation following a natural disturbance;

(II) prevents the expansion into greater sage-grouse or mule deer habitat of—

(aa) juniper, pinyon pine, or other associated conifers; or

(bb) nonnative or invasive vegetation;

(III) reduces the risk of loss of greater sage-grouse or mule deer habitat from wildfire or any other natural disturbance; or

(IV) provides emergency stabilization of soil resources after a natural disturbance; and

(vii) provides for the conduct of restoration treatments that—

(I) maximize the retention of old-growth and large trees, as appropriate for the forest type;

(II) consider the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity;

(III) are developed and implemented through a collaborative process that—

(aa) includes multiple interested persons representing diverse interests; and

(bb)(AA) is transparent and nonexclusive; or

(BB) meets the requirements for a resource advisory committee under subsections (c) through (f) of section 205 of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 (16 U.S.C. 7125); and

(IV) may include the implementation of a proposal that complies with the eligibility requirements of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program under section 4003(b) of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303(b)).

(B) DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES.—An activity referred to in subparagraph (A) is—

(i) manual cutting and removal of juniper trees, pinyon pine trees, other associated conifers, or other nonnative or invasive vegetation;

(ii) mechanical mastication, cutting, or mowing, mechanical piling and burning, chaining, broadcast burning, or yarding;

(iii) removal of cheat grass, medusa head rye, or other nonnative, invasive vegetation;

(iv) collection and seeding or planting of native vegetation using a manual, mechanical, or aerial method;

(v) seeding of nonnative, noninvasive, ruderal vegetation only for the purpose of emergency stabilization;

(vi) targeted use of an herbicide, subject to the condition that the use shall be in accordance with applicable legal requirements, Federal agency procedures, and land use plans;

(vii) targeted livestock grazing to mitigate hazardous fuels and control noxious and invasive weeds;

(viii) temporary removal of wild horses or burros in the area in which the activity is being carried out to ensure treatment objectives are met;

(ix) in coordination with the affected permit holder, modification or adjustment of permissible usage under an annual plan of use of a grazing permit issued by the Secretary concerned to achieve restoration treatment objectives;

(x) installation of new, or modification of existing, fencing or water sources intended to control use or improve wildlife habitat; or

(xi) necessary maintenance of, repairs to, rehabilitation of, or reconstruction of an existing permanent road or construction of temporary roads to accomplish the activities described in this subparagraph.

- (C) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “covered vegetation management activity” does not include—
- (i) any activity conducted in a wilderness area or wilderness study area;
 - (ii) any activity for the construction of a permanent road or permanent trail;
 - (iii) any activity conducted on Federal land on which, by Act of Congress or Presidential proclamation, the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited;
 - (iv) any activity conducted in an area in which activities under subparagraph (B) would be inconsistent with the applicable land and resource management plan; or
 - (v) any activity conducted in an inventoried roadless area.
- (2) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Secretary concerned” means—
- (A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System land; and
 - (B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public land.
- (3) TEMPORARY ROAD.—The term “temporary road” means a road that is—
- (A) authorized—
 - (i) by a contract, permit, lease, other written authorization; or
 - (ii) pursuant to an emergency operation;
 - (B) not intended to be part of the permanent transportation system of a Federal department or agency;
 - (C) not necessary for long-term resource management;
 - (D) designed in accordance with standards appropriate for the intended use of the road, taking into consideration—
 - (i) safety;
 - (ii) the cost of transportation; and
 - (iii) impacts to land and resources; and
 - (E) managed to minimize—
 - (i) erosion; and
 - (ii) the introduction or spread of invasive species.
- (b) CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.—
- (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Secretary concerned shall develop a categorical exclusion (as defined in section 1508.4 of title 40, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation)) for covered vegetation management activities carried out to protect, restore, or improve habitat for greater sage-grouse or mule deer.
- (2) ADMINISTRATION.—In developing and administering the categorical exclusion under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—
- (A) comply with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.);

(B) with respect to National Forest System land, apply the extraordinary circumstances procedures under section 220.6 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), in determining whether to use the categorical exclusion;

(C) with respect to public land, apply the extraordinary circumstances procedures under section 46.215 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (or successor regulations), in determining whether to use the categorical exclusion; and

(D) consider—

(i) the relative efficacy of landscape-scale habitat projects;

(ii) the likelihood of continued declines in the populations of greater sage-grouse and mule deer in the absence of landscape-scale vegetation management; and

(iii) the need for habitat restoration activities after wildfire or other natural disturbances.

(c) **IMPLEMENTATION OF COVERED VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES WITHIN THE RANGE OF GREATER SAGE-GROUSE AND MULE DEER.**—If the categorical exclusion developed under subsection (b) is used to implement a covered vegetative management activity in an area within the range of both greater sage-grouse and mule deer, the covered vegetative management activity shall protect, restore, or improve habitat concurrently for both greater sage-grouse and mule deer.

(d) **LONG-TERM MONITORING AND MAINTENANCE.**—Before commencing any covered vegetation management activity that is covered by the categorical exclusion under subsection (b), the Secretary concerned shall develop a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan, covering at least the 20-year period beginning on the date of commencement, to ensure that management of the treated area does not degrade the habitat gains secured by the covered vegetation management activity.

(e) **DISPOSAL OF VEGETATIVE MATERIAL.**—Subject to applicable local restrictions, any vegetative material resulting from a covered vegetation management activity that is covered by the categorical exclusion under subsection (b) may be—

(1) used for—

(A) fuel wood; or

(B) other products; or

(2) piled or burned, or both.

(f) **TREATMENT FOR TEMPORARY ROADS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Notwithstanding subsection (a)(1)(B)(xi), any temporary road constructed in carrying out a covered vegetation management activity that is covered by the categorical exclusion under subsection (b)—

(A) shall be used by the Secretary concerned for the covered vegetation management activity for not more than 2 years; and

(B) shall be decommissioned by the Secretary concerned not later than 3 years after the earlier of the date on which—

- (i) the temporary road is no longer needed; and
 - (ii) the project is completed.
- (2) REQUIREMENT.—A treatment under paragraph (1) shall include reestablishing native vegetative cover—
- (A) as soon as practicable; but
 - (B) not later than 10 years after the date of completion of the applicable covered vegetation management activity.
- (g) LIMITATIONS.—
- (1) PROJECT SIZE.—A covered vegetation management activity that is covered by the categorical exclusion under subsection (b) may not exceed 4,500 acres.
 - (2) LOCATION.—A covered vegetation management activity carried out on National Forest System land that is covered by the categorical exclusion under subsection (b) shall be limited to areas designated under section 602(b), as of the date of enactment of this section.