

McIver	Quigley	Steil
Meeks	Raskin	Stevens
Menendez	Reschenthaler	Strickland
Meng	Rogers (AL)	Strong
Meuser	Rogers (KY)	Suozi
Mfume	Rose	Swalwell
Miller (IL)	Rosendale	Sykes
Miller (OH)	Ross	Tenney
Miller (WV)	Rouzer	Thanedar
Miller-Meeks	Ruiz	Thompson (CA)
Mills	Rulli	Thompson (MS)
Moolenaar	Ruppersberger	Thompson (PA)
Mooney	Rutherford	Tiffany
Moore (AL)	Ryan	Timmons
Moore (UT)	Salazar	Titus
Moore (WI)	Salinas	Tokuda
Moran	Sánchez	Tonko
Morelle	Sarbanes	Torres (CA)
Moskowitz	Scalise	Torres (NY)
Moulton	Scanlon	Trahan
Mrvan	Schakowsky	Trone
Mullin	Schiff	Turner
Murphy	Schneider	Underwood
Napolitano	Scholten	Valadao
Neal	Schrier	Van Drew
Neguse	Schweikert	Van Dyne
Newhouse	Scott (VA)	Van Orden
Nickel	Scott, Austin	Vargas
Norcross	Scott, David	Vasquez
Norman	Self	Veasey
Nunn (IA)	Sessions	Wagner
Obenrolte	Sewell	Walberg
Ogles	Sherman	Waltz
Owens	Sherrill	Wasserman
Pallone	Simpson	Schultz
Palmer	Slotkin	Watson Coleman
Panetta	Smith (MO)	Weber (TX)
Pappas	Smith (NE)	Webster (FL)
Pelosi	Smith (NJ)	Wenstrup
Peltola	Smith (WA)	Westerman
Pence	Smucker	Wild
Perez	Sorensen	Williams (GA)
Peters	Soto	Williams (NY)
Pettersen	Spanberger	Williams (TX)
Pfleger	Spartz	Wilson (FL)
Phillips	Stansbury	Wilson (SC)
Pingree	Stanton	Wittman
Pocan	Stauber	Womack
Porter	Steel	Yakym
Posey	Stefanik	Zinke

NAYS—41

Barragán	Fox	McClintock
Bean (FL)	Gaetz	McGovern
Biggs	Garcia, Robert	Nadler
Brecheen	Good (VA)	Ocasio-Cortez
Burchett	Gosar	Omar
Burlison	Grothman	Perry
Bush	Hageman	Pressley
Casara	Harris	Ramirez
Clarke (NY)	Huffman	Roy
Cline	Jayapal	Takano
Cloud	Kamlager-Dove	Tlaib
Collins	Lee (CA)	Velázquez
Crane	Lee (PA)	Waters
Espallat	Massie	

NOT VOTING—18

Barr	Granger	McHenry
Bowman	Greene (GA)	Molinaro
Carter (GA)	Grijalva	Nehls
DesJarlais	Kean (NJ)	Rodgers (WA)
Evans	Luetkemeyer	Steube
Frost	Malliotakis	Wexton

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (during the vote). There is 1 minute remaining.

□ 1417

So (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

FIX OUR FORESTS ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their re-

marks and insert extraneous material on H.R. 8790.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 8790.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. FITZGERALD) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

□ 1421

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 8790) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, with Mr. FITZGERALD in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Natural Resources or their respective designees.

The gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. PORTER) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act, a bipartisan forestry package that I am proud to lead with my good friend and colleague from California (Mr. PETERS) and which passed out of the Natural Resources Committee earlier this year by voice vote.

This comprehensive package is the product of many months of hard work and bipartisan collaboration. This bill was not formulated in Washington, D.C. From field hearings in the shadow of Half Dome in Yosemite National Park to site visits to Tribal reservations in New Mexico, we have traveled the country to hear from experts and find consensus on the best approaches to improve the management of our Nation's forests.

I may be the only licensed forester in Congress, but you don't need a forestry degree to understand that our Nation's dire forest health crisis demands our immediate attention. This year alone, wildfires have burned more than 7.3 million acres nationally. In the past 10 years, wildfires in the U.S. have burned

over 73 million acres, roughly the same area as the State of Arizona.

Catastrophic wildfires are much more than just statistics. They destroy lives. They destroy property. They degrade our air and water quality, turn abundant wildlife habitat into moonscapes, and create billions of dollars in economic damage.

One of the most tragic consequences of the wildfire crisis is seeing entire communities in the path of uncontrollable megafires leveled year after year.

The 2018 Camp fire in California destroyed the towns of Paradise and Concow, burning over 18,000 structures and killing 85 people. In 2020, the North Complex fire completely engulfed and demolished the towns of Berry Creek and Feather Falls, wiping out over 2,300 structures. Just last year, I saw firsthand the immediate aftermath of the devastating wildfire in Maui that destroyed the historic town of Lahaina, causing untold damages.

Behind these examples are real people who are left to pick up the pieces and communities that will never be the same again. With over 1 billion acres at risk for wildfire across the country, we sadly know these tragedies will persist without intervention. In fact, the Forest Service has identified more than 70,000 communities and 44 million homes that are at risk of experiencing a catastrophic wildfire in the wildland-urban interface.

The good news is that we know what needs to be done. We must increase the pace and scale of scientifically proven forest management to restore health and resiliency to our Nation's forests.

The Fix Our Forests Act will restore forest health, increase resiliency to catastrophic wildfires, and protect vulnerable communities. Right now, it takes 3 to 5 years to begin work on a forest management program. This bill simplifies and streamlines cumbersome and costly environmental reviews so that, if enacted, land managers could go into our forests the next day and begin the work we know needs to happen.

H.R. 8790 empowers States, Tribal, local, and private partners to get more work done on the ground by strengthening the Good Neighbor Authority and Stewardship Contracting.

This bill also creates a framework for prioritizing treatments in our most at-risk areas. By encouraging the adoption of innovative science and technology, we can improve wildfire suppression capabilities, lower costs, and protect communities.

The best part is that we will save a pound in cure by investing a penny in prevention. The Congressional Budget Office has confirmed that reducing the risk of wildfires will lower wildfire suppression costs, allowing us to invest more in proactive, preventative forest management. If you believe that money is the only thing that will fix this problem, then you should vote for the Fix Our Forests Act because the bill will free up financial resources to

invest in critical forest management work.

This is a good bill that will help us finally turn the tide against the historic forest health crisis. I thank Members on both sides of the aisle who have contributed their input and ideas to this bipartisan product. I am proud to support even more bipartisan amendments offered by my colleagues on both sides of the aisle today.

They say the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The next best time is today. While we can't reverse the decades of inadequate forest management that have led us to this dire juncture, we can take a positive step today that will ensure healthier forests and communities for our children far into the future.

Mr. Chair, I support the bill and reserve the balance of my time.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE,
Washington, DC, September 3, 2024.

Hon. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: This letter confirms our mutual understanding regarding H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act". Thank you for collaborating with the Committee on Agriculture on the matters within our jurisdiction.

The Committee on Agriculture will forego any further consideration of this bill. However, by foregoing consideration at this time, we do not waive any jurisdiction over any subject matter contained in this or similar legislation. The Committee on Agriculture also reserves the right to seek appointment of an appropriate number of conferees should it become necessary and ask that you support such a request.

We would appreciate a response to this letter confirming this understanding with respect to H.R. 8790 and request a copy of our letters on this matter be published in the Congressional Record during Floor consideration.

Sincerely,
GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 11, 2024.

Hon. GLENN "GT" THOMPSON,
Chairman, Committee on Agriculture,
Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 26, 2024.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Agriculture and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of this bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Agriculture will not formally consider H.R. 8790 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I am pleased to support your request to name members of the Committee on Agriculture to any conference committee to consider such provisions. I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
Washington, DC, September 10, 2024.

HON. BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chair, Committee on Natural Resources,
House of Representatives, Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIR WESTERMAN: H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act", was referred primarily to the Committee on Natural Resources, with an additional referral to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology.

H.R. 8790 contains provisions within the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology's Rule X jurisdiction. As a result of your having consulted with the Committee and to expedite this bill for floor consideration, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will forego action on the bill. This is being done based on our mutual understanding that doing so will in no way diminish or alter the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology with respect to the appointment of conferees, or to any future jurisdictional claim over the subject matters contained in the bill or similar legislation.

I would appreciate your response to this letter confirming this understanding, and would request that you include a copy of this letter and your response in the committee report or in the Congressional Record during the floor consideration of this bill. Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,
FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman.

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES,
Washington, DC, September 12, 2024.

Hon. FRANK D. LUCAS,
Chairman, Committee on Science, Space, and
Technology, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: I write regarding H.R. 8790, the "Fix Our Forests Act," which was ordered reported by the Committee on Natural Resources on June 26, 2024.

I recognize that the bill contains provisions that fall within the jurisdiction of the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology and appreciate your willingness to forgo any further consideration of this bill. I acknowledge that the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology will not formally consider H.R. 8790 and agree that the inaction of your Committee with respect to the bill does not waive any jurisdiction over the subject matter contained therein.

I will ensure that our exchange of letters is included in the committee report and the Congressional Record during floor consideration of the bill. I appreciate your cooperation regarding this legislation.

Sincerely,
BRUCE WESTERMAN,
Chairman, Committee on Natural Resources.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Today, I rise in opposition to this bill, the so-called Fix Our Forests Act.

This bill is anything but a fix for our forests, and it threatens to intensify not just the wildfire crisis but also the biodiversity and climate crises.

We appreciate the focus and leadership that Chair WESTERMAN has shown on these issues, and it is clear to me and so many others that our forests are a genuine passion of his. Unfortunately, this bill completely misses the mark and has the potential to do serious damage.

Last Congress, Democrats delivered. We secured more than \$15 billion in his-

toric investments through the infrastructure law and the Inflation Reduction Act to help keep communities safe, restore healthy ecosystems, and promote healthy and sustainable forest management techniques.

We provided resources for the Forest Service so they could treat a record-breaking number of acres without gutting environmental protections. We provided planning resources for at-risk communities. We provided more than \$1 billion for staffing and resources in our permitting offices, funds that have already shortened project timelines by an average of 6 months. In addition, we supported better pay and benefits for wildland firefighters, an issue that I personally and consistently championed.

□ 1430

It is critical that our Federal land management agencies and their partners have the resources and staff capacity that is required to promote resilient forests and safe communities.

It is shocking that most House Republicans voted against those two successful, popular laws: the Inflation Reduction Act and the bipartisan infrastructure law. It is also shocking that right at the moment when a lot of those investments are close to needing reauthorization, the majority is turning its back once again, and it is in stark contrast with the bill today.

That is not for lack of trying on our side, but unfortunately, our Republican counterparts in the House Committee on Natural Resources have refused to work with committee Democrats on changes to the most egregious sections of this bill.

I was optimistic at seeing several amendments filed by Democrats that highlight the missing pieces of this legislation. These included an effort to consider climate change in the bill, add authorizations for much-needed funding throughout an otherwise unfunded bill, and to rid this bill of the unprecedented and dangerous sections that strip Americans of access to the courts under the guise of litigation reform.

Of course, these amendments were not ruled in order, supposedly due to Republican floor rules and procedure, rules and procedures that apparently apply only selectively because this bill has a slew of violations throughout, including numerous violations of the CutGo rules that are allegedly so important to the far-right Freedom Caucus.

I hope those Freedom Caucus members know what they are being asked to vote for. What is in this bill that is so important that CutGo no longer applies? Well, the heart and soul of this bill is a longstanding Republican wish list of priorities that undermine science-based management decisions, bedrock environmental protections, and opportunities for community input.

The so-called Fix Our Forests Act inappropriately stretches the credulity of

NEPA's emergency authorities. It undercuts the popular and bipartisan Endangered Species Act and even makes it more difficult for communities to challenge proposed projects in their own backyards.

The climate crisis, the biodiversity crisis, and the safety of our communities all converge in our Nation's forests. Unfettered backcountry logging is not the answer. We need to support communities, not silence them.

Do you know what else is not in this bill? Unlike the fire response laws that Democrats passed last Congress, there is nothing here about firefighter pay. What kind of fire response bill doesn't include pay for our firefighters in it? Are you kidding me?

H.R. 8790 sets a dangerous precedent. The climate crisis is now. The wildfire crisis is now. We shouldn't be wasting our time on rushed bills with no real solutions.

Many of the Republican initiatives here have already stalled in the 2025 farm bill process. A better strategy to address the wildfire crisis would be to work across jurisdictional boundaries and with our Senate colleagues to find true consensus.

We should be passing regular appropriation bills this week so that agencies like FEMA and the Forest Service have the resources they need and are not scrambling at the end of the fiscal year to find ways to fulfill their existing mandates, let alone the new and unfunded ones in this bill.

This is a live issue, by the way. The chief of the Forest Service has warned us explicitly that they are facing budget shortfalls due to Republican-led appropriations bills. In fact, just on Friday, the Forest Service announced that it had to halt 2025 seasonal hires amid the budget crunch.

We also need to work on providing relief and support for the communities that have been devastated by wildfire instead of trying to have Federal agencies undertake extensive management projects in their backyard without any true consent.

We should be passing legislation that pays our Federal wildland firefighters and gives them the benefits that they deserve, another major priority that this bill fails to advance.

The Forest Service is already stretched dangerously thin, and Federal firefighters are chronically underpaid. If we genuinely want to protect our communities and environment from devastating wildfires, we must prioritize people, ecosystems, and the economy. This bill fails to do each of those things.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, as I stated earlier, if forest health was about spending more money, then we would have the healthiest forests we have ever had, as my friends across the aisle interjected \$12 billion into the Forest Service budget

through the IRA and the IJJA, but their own goal of managing 6 million acres a year is going down—not going up but going down. It shows us that money is not the problem.

On the subject of firefighter pay, I think we can agree that our firefighters need higher pay. That is why, in the appropriations bill on the Interior, we had an increase in firefighter pay. There was only one Democrat who voted for that bill on the House floor.

Republicans have voted to increase the pay for firefighters, but again, it is not about money. If it was about money, then my colleagues would support this bill because the CBO has said this bill would actually save money. If we are not spending all this money fighting forest fires, we will be saving money coming out of the Treasury that we can spend on proactive things, like management.

Again, it is about the policy. This is good policy. It is bipartisan policy. We have worked hard to try to make it that.

Mr. Chair, I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Washington (Mr. NEWHOUSE), the chairman of the Western Caucus.

Mr. NEWHOUSE. Mr. Chair, I thank Mr. WESTERMAN for yielding me time to debate on this very important issue and bill.

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the Fix Our Forests Act. As chairman of the Congressional Western Caucus, I can tell you that wildfire risk remains top of mind as States across the West are ravaged by wildfires year after year.

In fact, as we heard, just this year alone, over 7 million acres have burned due to out-of-control fires, and get this: Fire season is not over yet. We are already above our 10-year average of acres affected, with fires burning larger and hotter than ever before.

We need proactive forest management now, and the Fix Our Forests Act will help us achieve that goal. This bipartisan effort will enable desperately needed active forest management by expediting permitting reviews and limiting senseless lawsuits from extreme environmentalists.

With more proactive forest management, we can prevent the risk of fires raging out of control and save our communities from devastating damage.

Mr. Chair, I thank my good friend from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN) for his leadership on this legislation. I am very proud to support this victory for rural Western America.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, bad process leads to bad policy. Unfortunately, the process for this bill has been a chaotic mess from the start.

We never had a hearing on an introduced bill, just the discussion draft, and that is despite, or maybe because of, the longstanding administration policy of not spending limited time and resources testifying on draft bills.

We raced to markup without testimony from the Department of the Inte-

rior. The administration nevertheless went above and beyond and provided extensive technical assistance and edits from both the Department of the Interior and the Forest Service.

I am not talking about policy differences here. I am talking about serious concerns with the bill not making sense. Unfortunately, the sponsor ignored those red flags.

Let me give you an example. The bill sets a timeline based on when a categorical exclusion is published in the Federal Register. I would like to make a point that was brought to our attention by the Forest Service itself: Categorical exclusions are not published in the Federal Register.

That is how sloppy the drafting is in this bill, and the process defects have continued.

This bill has numerous violations of the Freedom Caucus' floor protocols requiring offsets for authorized spending. I guess the CutGo protocols are out the window now.

It is convenient that, as of this morning, we still don't have a score from the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, on the bill. Maybe the Freedom Caucus just isn't aware of the problem.

The cherry on top? Republicans accidentally made in order an amendment drafted so badly that it would strike out the bill entirely and replace it with a noncontroversial bill that Democrats support. Republicans had to come to Democrats this morning to ask for our help in fixing that mistake.

I will end where it started: Bad process leads to bad policy.

Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from Nevada (Ms. LEE).

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Chair, I am not sure how familiar everyone is with the committee proceedings on this legislation, but just in case, I want to offer a little refresher.

This is not the first time that I have spoken out on the majority's either inability or outright refusal to do what is right by our Nation's firefighters.

In August 2023, my friend and colleague, Representative JOE NEGUSE, who is the ranking member of the Subcommittee on Federal Lands, introduced the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act of 2023. This bipartisan legislation would permanently fix the pay cliff that our firefighters, our hometown heroes who are actually out there fixing our forests, are facing at the end of this week.

We have known about this pay cliff for well over a year, but here we are, nearing the end of 2024, and the majority has still failed to enact a permanent fix. There is certainly not one in this bill, the Fix Our Forests Act.

Right now, the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act of 2023 has over two dozen champions on both sides of the aisle, evenly divided by Democrats and Republicans, myself included. Yet, all we have to show for this is yet another temporary fix in this week's CR, with Republican leadership once again stringing along these

men and women in uniform for another few months without a permanent solution.

As appropriators on both sides of the aisle have emphasized, these temporary patches end up costing taxpayers more than simply locking in a permanent pay fix. Strangely, this all comes after the House Republicans actually did vote for a permanent fix, as the chairman has stated.

Let me clear this up: It was part of the fiscal year 2025 Interior appropriations bill, which stands no chance of making it to the President's desk because of the majority's insistence on including over 80 poison pill policy riders to appease partisan extremists. If they were serious, they would have dropped these partisan riders.

Now, in spite of the bipartisan support for both the Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act and my own amendment to this bill to achieve the same goal, the majority is now claiming that that permanent pay fix is somehow not germane to the Fix Our Forests Act.

I ask, again, who exactly are the people on the front lines doing the work of fixing our forests? Answer: Our wildland firefighters.

Men and women are being paid less than a living wage in one of the wealthiest countries in the world to literally jump out of planes and contain fires before they burn down our homes and businesses.

The CHAIR. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Nevada.

Ms. LEE of Nevada. Mr. Chair, instead, we are going to slap a Band-Aid on this and revisit the pay issue after another congressional recess, which just got longer.

Meanwhile, these firefighters will hold their breath for another torturous 3 months, or even worse, they will get fed up and walk off the job, and our country will be less safe as a result.

What is happening is not just wrong, but it is nonsensical. We have firefighters risking their lives, needing a fix, with Republicans and Democrats both supporting a fix. Either a stand-alone bill or an amendment to this bill would provide that permanent fix, yet we don't have one. No more excuses.

□ 1445

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, you know, I hate to spend time in debate laying out how the procedures of the House work, but, number one, the majority doesn't determine what is germane. The Parliamentarian determines what is germane.

Number two, wildland firefighters actually support our bill. We gave our friends across the aisle an opportunity to vote for a pay increase for wildland firefighters that is in an appropriations bill. This is an authorization bill. It is not an appropriations bill. They chose to vote against the increased pay in

the appropriations bill, but again, we are working on an authorization bill, and it does meet House floor protocol.

There is not a CutGo because we are not cutting. Actually, the only thing we are cutting are expenses to the Federal Government.

I just wanted to clarify those few things.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. DUARTE).

Mr. DUARTE. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for yielding, and I rise in support of the Fix Our Forests Act.

As someone who farms on the edge of the forest in California, I can tell you, bad policies coming out of Washington and Sacramento, exacerbated by frivolous litigation, have led to failed outcomes in Federal forest management. There is no doubt about it: This is abandonment of one of our natural resources.

As we see with government-imposed droughts in California, laws and regulations are being twisted to block forest management and timber harvesting in our national forests, which peaked in the 1980s, but steadily declined and have not recovered. This has been exacerbated by the designation of over 111 million acres of preservation wilderness areas that severely limit access, ban timber harvests, and make even firefighting difficult in our forests.

This resource abandonment is also hurting our communities. Countless jobs are lost, and insurance companies are seeking to cancel policies and refusing to even provide fire insurance coverage in areas of California because of the risk of out-of-control forest fires.

These fires also devalue our national forest habitat and watersheds.

For example, we are now learning that some of these fires burn so hot that they may be changing the soil chemistry to create cancer-causing hexavalent chromium. That is the Erin Brockovich compound. This raises serious concerns about the toxic chemical getting into our groundwater when runoff from burn areas occurs.

That raises another serious concern: sedimentation of our rivers. When our forests burn, debris washes off the Sierra Nevadas and settles into our waterways, silting up our rivers, streams, and reservoirs and hurts fish species. This increases flood risks and decreases our ability to store water.

These fires also release millions of tons of pollution into the air that we breathe that can cause respiratory issues.

This resource abandonment is hurting Californians, which is unacceptable, and that is why I am proud to support the Fix Our Forests Act.

This commonsense legislation will make necessary reforms to expedite forest management projects and reduce frivolous lawsuits designed to slow or block action. This bill will help protect our forests, the environment, and will

create jobs, and I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chair, this year, wildfires have already burned over 7 million acres of forests and over 1,000 homes and other structures. Hundreds of thousands of people have been forced to evacuate, often with just minutes to pack their most important belongings, not knowing if they will ever return to their homes.

Many have done all the right things to protect their property, but because of the magnitude of the wildfire crisis, they cannot get insurance for their homes. Every day of fire season feels like they are gambling with everything they own.

After decades of mismanagement and misguided fire suppression tactics, there is now a scientific consensus on the solution: active forest management, State, local, Federal, and Tribal collaboration; and continued research and development on next-generation technologies and solutions.

The problem is that forest management projects like clearing dead trees and dry vegetation that fuel fires often require multiyear environmental reviews followed by years of litigation in many cases. While we wait for analysis, forests burn down, air pollution worsens, and the threats posed by climate change to our local communities are exacerbated.

Places like Jimtown, Montana, know the consequences of inaction, where the Forest Service proposed treating at-risk land near people's homes. They conducted a comprehensive environmental review, and they gained community support. Then an outside group decided that they knew better than the experts and the Forest Service and the residents, and they sued. They claimed the NEPA analysis did not do enough to study the impact on a particular bird of prey, the goshawk—not that they didn't study it, but they didn't study it enough. Locals pleaded with the group to drop that lawsuit, but the group decided to go through with the appeal anyway.

A hearing was set for October of 2003, but unfortunately, in July of 2003, the exact type of fire the Forest Service warned about burned down that forest. The fire caused evacuations, took out power to a nearby community, and cost over \$1 million to suppress.

When the case was finally heard 2 years later, the Ninth Circuit ruled in the Forest Service's favor and found the reviews were sufficient.

That is the problem. The community and its needs were ignored. The community wasn't helped. It was ignored. Lives, homes, and businesses were all needlessly put in harm's way. The goshawks' habitat was destroyed.

The Fix Our Forests Act that I co-sponsored with Mr. WESTERMAN is a

comprehensive bill to simplify and expedite the most critical forest management projects while maintaining strong environmental standards.

It will reduce the threat of litigation that delays these projects, and it adds new opportunities for communities to engage early in the process. It also creates new programs to protect homes and communities from fires and makes it easier for them to access Federal assistance.

This is a bipartisan bill with cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, and it passed out of the committee by a voice vote. It is endorsed by the wildland firefighters, who we all agree, it seems to me, deserve a raise, and we should make that happen.

I worked with groups like The Nature Conservancy and the Environmental Defense Fund, and others to write this bill. The Nature Conservancy has decided to stay neutral on the bill because of one provision they find problematic. To Chair WESTERMAN's credit, he accepted The Nature Conservancy's other edits. The Nature Conservancy has the luxury of staying neutral as an outside group, but we all need in this body to decide where we stand.

I have spoken with colleagues on my side of the aisle, Democrats, who tell me that they will oppose the bill, although they agree with 18 out of 22 things in the text. Compromise is about accepting the 4 things you don't like so you can get the 18 things you do like. Mr. WESTERMAN has worked with me and other Democratic offices to adopt Democratic amendments to improve the legislation.

We don't have the time to wait for perfect. Every day we wait, more land burns down. Let's get this bill passed and provide some hope for Americans.

Mr. Chair, this Fix Our Forests Act establishes a national Fireshed Center as the central information hub of our wildfire strategy.

I introduced an amendment with Representative HARDER to clarify the center's role, which was not made in order due to a misunderstanding about germaneness. Our amendment would have clarified the purposes of the center, provided it with specific direction for its implementation, and provided safeguards for the protection of sensitive proprietary information, while ensuring representation from non-Federal entities.

I look forward to working with the gentleman, Mr. WESTERMAN, in conference to get these changes made.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I sincerely thank the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) for his remarks and for his partnership on this legislation. As he mentioned, due to some procedural issues, we were not able to consider an amendment he was offering to make improvements to the bill's Fireshed Center. This is an effort that I support, and I regret we were unable to get this amendment made in order.

I do look forward to working with the gentleman on incorporating the amendment in the future discussions with the Senate.

I also thank Matt Weiner and the entire team at Megafire Action for working with us tirelessly on this important amendment and for their support of this bipartisan legislation.

Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Wisconsin (Mr. TIFFANY), the subcommittee chair on Federal Lands.

Mr. TIFFANY. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of Chairman WESTERMAN's bipartisan Fix Our Forests Act.

This bill is the culmination of the House Committee on Natural Resources' efforts this Congress to advance innovative solutions to increase the pace and scale of forest management, protect vulnerable communities from catastrophic wildfires, and restore health and resiliency to our Nation's ailing forests and Federal lands.

Addressing the health of our forests and rangelands is not an issue that will be solved by simply throwing more dollars at it. We need substantive changes in our land management practices.

Undermining active forest management has caused damage to our Nation's forests and Federal lands, and we have seen the consequences of this mismanagement out West, resulting in year after year of bad wildfire seasons.

We can act right now to reverse this trend, and that starts with passing this bill.

This bill contains streamlined tools to expedite bureaucratic environmental reviews, ending frivolous litigation that delays important projects, expanding Good Neighbor Authority, prioritizing high-risk forests, and a fix to the Cottonwood decision, which is responsible for doubling the cost of some projects.

It also includes my bill, the ACRES Act, which requires land managers to produce yearly hazardous fuels reduction reports based on the actual number of acres that they treated, and I will note that this proposal already passed the House with robust bipartisan support.

The provisions included in this bill will lead to better management, which in turn, will result in better outcomes for our land managers and our local communities with fewer wildfires and a cleaner environment.

To one of the comments, Mr. Chair, that was shared previously about the firefighter problem we have and the danger they are being put in, the number one thing we can do to protect firefighters' health and life is to manage our forests.

Take a look at this chart here to my right where you see forest management. The amount of wood that is being harvested, all from our Federal forests, steadily declined since the 1980s.

What happened with wildfires? They increased significantly. There is a direct correlation. Manage our forests,

take timber off from it, and we will not have these wildfires as we have seen since 1988.

I thank the chairman, Mr. WESTERMAN, for his tireless work on this in the Natural Resources Committee, which I sit on, and I urge passage of this bill.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman for his leadership on the subcommittee and for his work going into this bill to make the bill better and to add some of the things that he mentioned.

When we talk about taking timber off of the forests, we are not talking about clear-cutting. It always gets misconstrued that we want to clear-cut the forests. I challenge anyone to show me where the U.S. Forest Service is clear-cutting because you won't find that. I have asked them: Is there any place you still clear-cut? And they said: No.

What we are talking about is forest management, where we go in and we thin out, we create growing space, we allow these trees to be healthier, more vibrant. We allow them to have access to sunlight, access to soil moisture and nutrients, and it gives them an opportunity to grow. It also creates space when the fire comes through it can drop down to the forest floor where it can easily be put out if it needs to be put out.

Some fire is beneficial to the forest, but certainly not fire that gets up in the crown of the trees and destroys everything in its path.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I want to briefly address a claim that we heard earlier that this bill was written by The Nature Conservancy or written with them. I am sure that that would come as a surprise to the bill's author, Chairman WESTERMAN, but moreover, we have checked with the group, and not only did they not write it, The Nature Conservancy says they have not even endorsed this bill.

I just want to clear that up for everyone.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE).

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. Mr. Chair, I rise today in opposition to H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act.

This bill had real potential, potential that could have been realized if committee Democrats had been meaningfully involved in its development.

Wildfires are a crisis that demands our collective attention across party lines. We have seen firsthand how it devastates communities, including in southern California where the Post fire continues to burn in the rugged hills of East L.A.

Hot, dry, and windy conditions intensified by the climate crisis are fueling more frequent and severe wildfires. These fires are spreading faster, lasting longer, and growing more intense.

Let me be clear: While this may seem like the new normal, it is anything but. The wildfire crisis is linked directly to the climate crisis, and if we are serious about protecting our communities, we must tackle both head-on.

That means reducing emissions and committing to a clean, renewable economy, something that, sadly, this Congress under Republican leadership refuses to address.

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We must also ensure that our Federal land management agencies have the resources, personnel, and tools to promote resilient forests and safe communities.

That is why House Democrats took bold action in the last Congress.

Through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, we secured \$28 billion for the Department of the Interior and \$5.5 million for the Forest Service to address wildfire management and resilience.

Let's not forget: every single Natural Resources Committee Republican voted "no." Then came the Inflation Reduction Act, which provided an additional \$2.5 billion for ecosystem resilience and \$500 million for wildfire workforce needs. Once again, Republicans opposed these critical investments.

Thanks to these historic actions, the Biden-Harris administration has made significant progress. The national wildfire strategy is delivering record-breaking restoration efforts to strengthen our landscapes and keep communities safe.

We also established the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, which released 148 consensus recommendations. I am pleased to see that the Fix Our Forests Act incorporates several of these recommendations.

The Acting CHAIR. The time of the gentlewoman has expired.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentlewoman from California.

Ms. KAMLAGER-DOVE. In fact, Mr. Chair, we support 18 of the 22 sections of the bill. However, without additional changes, the bill includes harmful provisions that go beyond what the wildfire commission recommended.

Despite 148 opportunities for consensus, my colleagues across the aisle couldn't resist undermining our bedrock environmental protections like NEPA, the Endangered Species Act, and the National Historic Preservation Act.

This is unnecessary because the evidence is clear: the Forest Service has achieved record-breaking results in reducing wildfire risks, thanks to the investments Democrats made last Congress over Republican opposition.

Instead of weakening vital environmental laws, we should focus on building on the progress we have already made.

The wildfire crisis is, and should be, a bipartisan priority. Democrats stand

ready to work together on consensus-based solutions that provide our land management agencies with the tools they need. Unfortunately, H.R. 8790 is not that solution.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, if the minority truly were concerned about carbon in the atmosphere, their number one priority would be to keep forests healthy, to keep massive amounts of carbon dioxide from going up in wildfires, and to keep dead and decaying wood from being digested by microorganisms and being released as methane into the atmosphere.

If we want to make less carbon in the atmosphere and if we want to keep it in the trees, then we should utilize the greatest carbon capture and sequestration device ever known to man, and that is a tree. It is on a wide scale a low-cost and economical way to capture and sequester carbon. However, when we let our forests become subject to bug and infestation attacks and to catastrophic wildfire, then we are going in the opposite direction.

If somebody wants to make the argument that we need healthy forests for a better climate, then they should vote for this bill because that is what this bill would do.

Mr. Chair, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. BENTZ).

Mr. BENTZ. Mr. Chairman, I thank Chair WESTERMAN for the work he has done in creating the Fix Our Forests Act.

The path to solving any problem starts with an understanding of scale. The Western United States has millions upon millions of acres of trees, over 85 million acres of forests on the West Coast alone. In my State of Oregon, there are 30 million acres; Washington, 22.5 million; and California, 33 million. There are 85 million acres of forest, 132,000 square miles, an area bigger than New Mexico.

Now, it is not a problem to have forests. When they are managed well, they are an incredible, essential, and an irreplaceable asset. However, our forests are growing faster and faster, building up huge amounts of potential energy which, without any doubt whatsoever, will burn as things are currently situated.

Fires are perhaps started by an arsonist, a lightning bolt, or the negligence of a camper. When this happens, the overgrown and dry forests will burn like paper. If there is even a moderate wind, these fires spread just like wildfire because they are burning up and destroying land, animals, structures, homes, and even people.

Just this year in Oregon, in my home State, almost 2 million acres burned. A huge amount of these 2 million acres was forestland. The Forest Service says that about 250 million of our tax dollars were spent fighting these fires. At least 32 homes were destroyed. That is in addition to hundreds of homes that have been lost in previous fires.

The value of timber burned up on private ground, 330,000 acres, caught up in

this year's fires, just in Oregon, is in the tens of millions of dollars.

Because of forest fire risk, the cost of fire insurance on thousands of homes across Oregon is skyrocketing and in some cases is not even available.

The amount of CO₂, smoke, ash, dust, and permanent environmental harm is enormous. The old-growth timber burned up and forever lost is unforgivable. This is just a sample of what has happened in Oregon.

The same thing on an even greater and more damaging scale happened in California this year, Washington, Montana, and so on.

The causes of overgrown and dry forests burning up are many, but one of the obvious things we should be doing, and something that all rational people agree upon, is to reduce the amount of fuel in our forests, to actually go in and remove woody material from these 85 million acres that are not essential to the forest.

So why isn't this happening?

Why are we dragging our feet when it comes to getting brush and understory of small trees out of our forests?

Why are we failing to clean up our forests and protecting them?

Of course, the reason is our laws and the haystack of regulations that get in the way. They create delays, they create roadblocks, they create litigation paralysis, and they create endless bureaucratic efforts to write the perfect management plan. It is this set of problems and obstacles that the Fix Our Forests Act, brought to us today by Chair WESTERMAN, would help significantly resolve.

The summary of the Fix Our Forests Act calls out the fact that we would be simplifying the approach to this, and that would be an excellent idea, revitalizing our rural economies, and renewing and prioritizing our science. All of these are excellent things.

I just want to say that when I was young, living on a ranch in eastern Oregon on the border of the Malheur National Forest, a fire in our forest was rare. In fact, in the 15 years I lived in that beautiful place, I remember only one forest fire in that forest. Now horrific fires are an annual and all too predictable occurrence. These are not small fires. These are terrible, destructive, and awful fires.

Just this summer, I received a call from a terrified constituent begging me to call airplanes with fire retardant to save their home. It is a miracle that only one person, and that was bad enough, was killed this year in fighting these fires. Next year we may be not so lucky.

Let's pass this bill so we can get into the forests now, not years from now, reduce fuel loads and make our communities and our people safer and our forests more resilient.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from California (Mr. PANETTA), who is a cosponsor of the bill and has been a tireless advocate on improving forest health.

Mr. PANETTA. Mr. Chair, I appreciate this opportunity. I think we have seen why we are here today. It is because in the past decade, America has witnessed firsthand the devastation, the death, and the massive destruction from wildfires.

In my home State of California, this year alone, wildfires have burned almost 1 million acres. That is just one-fourth of the acres that burned back in 2020.

In my congressional district along the coast of California, we have endured some of the most extreme wildfires in our Nation's history in the Los Padres National Forest, Santa Cruz Mountains, and the Big Sur coastline.

Now, unfortunately, 80 percent of wildfires are caused by humans. What really makes us vulnerable to these extreme fires in this time of extreme weather and, yes, in this time of extreme climate change, is that we are doing what we can to fight the fires, but we just aren't doing enough to prevent the fires.

Decades of dereliction when it comes to doing anything to manage wildlands is a persistent cause of why the Western United States is so susceptible to the devastating conflagrations we are experiencing.

That is why we need to do something, anything, when it comes to the management of our forests and to be proactive when it comes to protecting our wetlands and the lives and livelihoods of those who live in the wildland-urban interface.

The Fix Our Forests Act is a big step in the right direction to restore the health of forests, to bolster their resiliency, and, yes, to reduce the threat of wildfires.

This legislation would allow all levels of government to play their part with community wildfire risk reduction programs, a national Fireshed Center, and, yes, to fix our flawed permitting system, not by getting rid of NEPA but with the flexibility necessary so that those on the ground can implement prevention projects, manage our forests, and therefore protect our forests.

Another key part of this legislation would also expand and encourage the use of prescribed burns in fireshed areas that would not only help prevent fires, it would help my congressional district keep on track with our management plan.

As wildfire seasons have turned into wildfire years, we have learned our lesson and have done an excellent job fighting fires, but now it is time we must do something to prevent wildfires.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, the National Environmental Policy Act, or NEPA, and litigation are not the reason that we have catastrophic wildfires. In fact, a 2020 study showed that only one out of every 450 NEPA reviews are ever challenged in court.

Plus, the Forest Service already conducts over 85 percent of its work

through existing categorical exclusions, which allows proceeding without a NEPA environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement.

The reality is that the Forest Service has a wide range of tools and policies designed to expedite the forest management projects.

Here is the actual problem: The Forest Service is chronically underfunded. Gaps in funding are directly tied to project delays and management challenges across the agency. A review conducted by the "Columbia Journal of Environmental Law" found that many sources of delay attributed to NEPA are caused by external factors, and they point to inadequate staffing, insufficient funding, and delays of obtaining information from permittees.

The Forest Service doesn't need us to roll back our environmental laws. It needs sustainable funding and additional staff capacity.

However, the Republicans who keep voting against that funding would rather scapegoat our environmental laws and the public's right to access the courthouse.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, it was insinuated earlier that my good friend, Mr. PETERS, did not work with The Nature Conservancy.

It begins by saying that: "TNC, which has decades of experience in wildfire mitigation and resilience work, was at the table with Representatives PETERS and WESTERMAN to improve this bill from its initial draft form."

They go on to say that they are not endorsing the bill because of some issues they have, but they also list several things that they approve of in the bill.

Mr. Chair, I include in the RECORD the Nature Conservancy statement.

TNC NEW STATEMENT

TNC's position: TNC, which has decades of experience in wildfire mitigation and resilience work, was at the table with Reps. PETERS and WESTERMAN to improve this bill from its initial draft form, and while it has certainly improved since that point due in part to our advocacy, we are not endorsing the bill due to a remaining problematic provision in the litigation reform section that TNC believes could damagingly limit community engagement.

However, we also believe there are beneficial provisions in the bill, such as the Good Neighbor Authority provisions, the inclusion of Tribal priorities in the fireshed management section, the Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program, and the Seeds of Success cross agency coordination.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield 3 minutes to the gentlewoman from California (Mrs. KIM).

Mrs. KIM of California. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise in strong support of H.R. 8790, the Fix Our Forests Act.

The fear facing many of my constituents during California's peak wildfire

season, especially in the canyon communities close to the Cleveland National Forest, became a reality in recent weeks as multiple wildfires burn simultaneously in southern California, including the Airport fire in my district.

The Airport fire has burned over 23,500 acres, and still counting, in Orange and Riverside Counties.

I am grateful to the first responders who are working day and night to keep our communities safe. Times like these also show us that first responders need all tools available to protect our communities and respond to the ever-changing threat that wildfires pose.

The Fix Our Forests Act includes legislation that I introduced called the Wildfire Technology Demonstration, Evaluation, Modernization, and Optimization, or DEMO, Act, that would address this need.

I introduced the DEMO Act after hearing from firefighting agencies and companies developing innovative technologies.

This bipartisan legislation aims to deploy more emerging technologies to fight wildfires by allowing private entities to partner with Federal land management agencies to test wildfire technologies in a 7-year pilot program.

This is a win-win for private entities looking to test their technologies at scale and Federal land management agencies working to deploy emerging technologies to help combat wildfires.

I thank my friend, Representative CROW, for his partnership on the DEMO Act, as well as Chairman WESTERMAN and Representative PETERS for including my legislation in this important and timely bill to keep our communities and forests safe from wildfires.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on H.R. 8790.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentlewoman for her efforts in helping make this a better bill. She knows all too well the devastation of catastrophic wildfires like what are happening in her district.

Mr. Chair, I have no further requests for time, I am prepared to close, and I continue to reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, may I inquire how much time remains.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California has 8 minutes remaining.

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Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, we need to clear up the record about this idea that the Forest Service supports expanded categorical exclusions, often called CEs.

The Fix Our Forests Act would massively expand categorical exclusions for fireshed management projects, including activities like logging and pesticide application, which would have significant impacts on forest ecosystems.

Typically, categorical exclusions are developed by the agencies with the

input of experts. They are detailed and specific with appropriate guardrails that prevent unnecessary harm, and they are a useful tool. In fact, 82 percent of Forest Service projects are executed using categorical exclusions.

The so-called Fix Our Forests Act takes a sledgehammer to that track record. The Forest Service has said that they would use any new authorities Congress grants to them, but they are not advocating for any larger categorical exclusions.

We are not here to try and stop the Forest Service from using the tools that it has. What we are trying to do is avoid complicating the processes that the Forest Service has, and that is a real issue.

The Forest Service has explicitly told us in technical assistance that this bill's directives around the creation and implementation of firehosed management projects are duplicative and confusing. Why aren't we listening to them?

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Chair, I know that conversations about wildfire can be very difficult for Members on both sides. The fires this year and in recent years have been devastating, and I have seen it firsthand with wildfires in my district.

I close with the same message that I started with: Republican leadership is using the very real and painful wildfire crisis as a Trojan horse for a long-standing wish list of harmful environmental policies. Our forests are critical carbon reserves, majestic destinations for outdoor recreation, and habitats for a range of wildlife, including many threatened and endangered species. All of that will be put at risk by this bill's overzealous approach to logging and other destructive management practices.

This bill codifies and expands the use of emergency authorities dramatically, bending the protections provided by the successful, popular, and iconic laws, such as the Endangered Species Act and NEPA. There is nothing discrete or cute about opening this many acres to management without proper review.

Mr. Chair, confronting the wildfire crisis is hard work that requires smart planning and broad collaboration. We won't get there through shortcuts and rollbacks.

Relying on rushed planning for routine forest management undermines community involvement. We shouldn't be undercutting the people who are most at risk.

The Forest Service has been asking us to help them with consistent, reliable budgets. They have been warning us that the appropriations numbers from our Republican colleagues are causing extreme budget shortfalls. They announced just last week that

the Forest Service cannot afford to hire nonfire temporary staff anymore.

Let me repeat that: The Republican inability to fund the government on time and with sufficient resources has caused the Forest Service to place a freeze on hiring the very staff who hike into the backcountry to maintain the trails that so many of us use and love.

Finally, this bill fails to provide a permanent and much-needed fix for wildland firefighter pay. That should be one of our top priorities when it comes to confronting the wildfire crisis. Yet, it is completely sidestepped by this legislation.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to join me in opposing this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Mr. Chair, what we are doing is not working. Our forests are not getting healthier. Our environment is not getting better. The climate is not getting better. Wildlife habitats are not getting better. Water quality is not getting better. It is all getting worse from the things that we have been doing the last 30 years.

If that is not enough evidence to say it is time for a change, I don't know what is. The time to fix our forests is now. This is a good, commonsense, bipartisan bill for our forest health and our Nation's benefit. The Fix Our Forests Act will end the status quo of overgrown, fire-prone tinderboxes.

Mr. Chair, again, this bill will make our forests healthier and more resilient. It will protect our communities, save taxpayer money, and cut red tape. I urge the adoption of this bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. All time for general debate has expired.

Pursuant to the rule, the bill shall be considered for amendment under the 5-minute rule.

The amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Natural Resources, printed in the bill, modified by the amendment printed in part C of House Report 118-705, shall be considered as adopted and the bill, as amended, shall be considered as read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 8790

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

(a) *SHORT TITLE.*—This Act may be cited as the “Fix Our Forests Act”.

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

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

TITLE I—LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION

Subtitle A—Addressing Emergency Wildfire Risks in High Priority Firehosed

Sec. 101. Designation of firehosed management areas.

Sec. 102. Firehosed center.

Sec. 103. Firehosed registry.

Sec. 104. Shared stewardship.

Sec. 105. Firehosed assessments.

Sec. 106. Emergency firehosed management.

Sec. 107. Sunset.

Subtitle B—Expanding Collaborative Tools to Reduce Wildfire Risk and Improve Forest Health

Sec. 111. Modification of the treatment of certain revenue and payments under good neighbor agreements.

Sec. 112. Fixing stewardship end result contracting.

Sec. 113. Intra-agency strike teams.

Sec. 114. Locally-led restoration.

Sec. 115. Joint Chiefs landscape restoration partnership program.

Sec. 116. Collaborative forest landscape restoration program.

Subtitle C—Litigation Reform

Sec. 121. Commonsense litigation reform.

Sec. 122. Consultation on forest plans.

TITLE II—PROTECTING COMMUNITIES IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

Sec. 201. Community wildfire risk reduction program.

Sec. 202. Community wildfire defense research program.

Sec. 203. Vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance relating to electric transmission and distribution facility rights-of-way.

Sec. 204. Categorical exclusion for electric utility lines rights-of-way.

Sec. 205. Seeds of success.

TITLE III—TRANSPARENCY AND TECHNOLOGY

Sec. 301. Biochar innovations and opportunities for conservation, health, and advancements in research.

Sec. 302. Accurate hazardous fuels reduction reports.

Sec. 303. Public-private wildfire technology deployment and demonstration partnership.

Sec. 304. GAO study on Forest Service policies.

Sec. 305. Forest Service Western headquarters study.

Sec. 306. Keeping forest plans current and monitored.

SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) **DIRECTOR.**—The term “Director” means the Director of the Firehosed Center appointed under section 102.

(2) **FIRESHED.**—The term “firehosed” means a landscape-scale area that faces similar wildfire threat where a response strategy could influence the wildfire outcome.

(3) **FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECT.**—The term “firehosed management project” means a project under section 106.

(4) **FIRESHED REGISTRY.**—The term “Firehosed Registry” means the firehosed registry established under section 103.

(5) **FOREST PLAN.**—The term “forest plan” means—

(A) a land use plan prepared by the Bureau of Land Management for public lands pursuant to section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712);

(B) a land and resource 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); or

(C) a forest management plan (as defined in section 304 of the National Indian Forests Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3104)) with respect to Indian forest land or rangeland.

(6) **GOVERNOR.**—The term “Governor” means the Governor or any other appropriate executive official of an affected State or Indian Tribe or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

(7) **HAZARDOUS FUELS MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.**—The term “hazardous fuels management activities” means any vegetation management

activities (or combination thereof) that reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical thinning, mastication, prescribed burning, cultural burning (as determined by the applicable Indian Tribe), timber harvest, and grazing.

(8) **HFRA TERMS.**—The terms “at-risk community”, “community wildfire protection plan”, and “wildland-urban interface” have the meanings given such terms, respectively, in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

(9) **INDIAN FOREST LAND OR RANGELAND.**—The term “Indian forest land or rangeland” means land that—

(A) is held in trust by, or with a restriction against alienation by, the United States for an Indian Tribe or a member of an Indian Tribe; and

(B)(i)(I) is Indian forest land (as defined in section 304 of the National Indian Forest Resources Management Act (25 U.S.C. 3103)); or

(II) has a cover of grasses, brush, or any similar vegetation; or

(ii) formerly had a forest cover or vegetative cover that is capable of restoration.

(10) **INDIAN TRIBE.**—The term “Indian Tribe” has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

(11) **NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM LANDS.**—The term “National Forest System lands” has the meaning given the term in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1609).

(12) **PUBLIC LANDS.**—The term “public lands” has the meaning given that term in section 103 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702), except that the term includes Coos Bay Wagon Road Grant lands and Oregon and California Railroad Grant lands.

(13) **RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.**—The term “relevant Congressional Committees” means—

(A) the Committees on Natural Resources and Agriculture of the House of Representatives; and

(B) the Committees on Energy and Natural Resources and Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate.

(14) **RESPONSIBLE OFFICIAL.**—The term “responsible official” means an employee of the Department of the Interior or Forest Service who has the authority to make and implement a decision on a proposed action.

(15) **SECRETARIES.**—The term “Secretaries” means each of—

(A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

(B) the Secretary of Agriculture.

(16) **SECRETARY.**—The term “Secretary” means the Secretary of Agriculture.

(17) **SECRETARY CONCERNED.**—The term “Secretary concerned” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, with respect to National Forest System lands; and

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, with respect to public lands.

(18) **STATE.**—The term “State” means each of the several States, the District of Columbia, and each territory of the United States

TITLE I—LANDSCAPE-SCALE RESTORATION

Subtitle A—Addressing Emergency Wildfire Risks in High Priority Fireheds

SEC. 101. DESIGNATION OF FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.

(a) **DESIGNATION OF FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.**—

(1) **INITIAL DESIGNATIONS.**—For the period beginning on the date of enactment of this Act and ending on the date that is 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, there are designated fireshed management areas, which—

(A) shall be comprised of individual landscape-scale fireheds identified as being a high risk fireshed in the “Wildfire Crisis Strategy” published by the Forest Service in January 2022;

(B) shall be comprised of individual landscape-scale fireheds identified by the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, as being in the top 20 percent of the 7,688 fireheds published by the Rocky Mountain Research Station of the Forest Service in 2019 for wildfire exposure based on the following criteria—

(i) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to communities, including risk to structures and life;

(ii) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to municipal watersheds, including tribal water supplies and systems; and

(iii) risk of forest conversion due to wildfire;

(C) shall not overlap with any other fireshed management areas;

(D) may contain Federal and non-Federal land, including Indian forest lands or rangelands; and

(E) where the Secretary concerned shall carry out fireshed management projects.

(2) **FURTHER FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREA DESIGNATIONS.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—On the date that is 5 years after the date of the enactment of this Act and every 5 years thereafter, the Secretary, in consultation with the Secretary of the Interior, shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees an updated map of fireheds based on the Fireshed Registry maintained under section 103.

(B) **DESIGNATION.**—Not later than 60 days after submitting an updated fireshed map under subparagraph (A), the Secretary shall, based on such map, designate additional fireshed management areas that are identified as being in the top 20 percent of fireheds at risk of wildfire exposure based on the criteria specified in subparagraphs (B), (C), (D), and (E) of paragraph (1).

(b) **APPLICABILITY OF NEPA.**—The designation of fireshed management areas under this section shall not be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

SEC. 102. FIRESHED CENTER.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, shall jointly establish a Fireshed Center (hereinafter referred to as the “Center”) comprised of at least one career representative from each of the following:

(A) The Forest Service.

(B) The Bureau of Land Management.

(C) The National Park Service.

(D) The Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(E) The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

(F) The U.S. Geological Survey.

(G) The Department of Defense.

(H) The Department of Homeland Security.

(I) The Department of Energy.

(J) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(K) The National Science Foundation.

(L) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(M) The National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

(N) The National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(2) **DIRECTOR.**—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, shall jointly appoint a Director of the Center, who—

(A) shall be an employee of the U.S. Geological Survey or the Forest Service;

(B) shall serve an initial term of not more than 7 years; and

(C) may serve one additional term of not more than 7 years after the initial term described in subparagraph (B).

(3) **ADDITIONAL REPRESENTATION.**—The Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest

Service and the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, may jointly appoint additional representatives of Federal agencies to the Center, as the Secretaries determine necessary.

(b) **PURPOSES.**—The purposes of the Center are to—

(1) comprehensively assess and predict fire and smoke in the wildland and built environment interface across jurisdictions to inform—

(A) land and fuels management;

(B) community, public health, and built environment risk reduction; and

(C) fire response and post-fire recovery;

(2) provide data aggregation, real-time land and fuels management services, and science-based decision support services;

(3) reduce fragmentation and duplication across Federal land management agencies with respect to predictive service and decision support functions related to wildland fire and smoke;

(4) promote coordination and sharing of data regarding wildland fire and smoke decision making between Federal agencies, States, Indian Tribes, local governments, academic or research institutions, and private entities;

(5) streamline procurement processes and cybersecurity systems related to addressing wildland fire and smoke;

(6) amplify and distribute existing, and develop as necessary, publicly accessible data, models, technologies (including mapping technologies), assessments, and National Weather Service fire weather forecasts to support short- and long-term planning regarding wildland fire and smoke risk reduction and post-fire recovery while avoiding duplicative efforts; and

(7) maintain the Fireshed Registry established under section 103.

(c) **MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING.**—The Center may enter into memorandums of understanding, contracts, or other agreements with State governments, Indian Tribes, local governments, academic or research institutions, and private entities to improve the information and operations of the Center.

(d) **ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERVICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.**—

(1) **USGS SUPPORT.**—The Secretary of the Interior shall make personnel of the U.S. Geological Survey available to the Center for such administrative support, technical services, and development and dissemination of data as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this section.

(2) **USFS SUPPORT.**—The Secretary shall make personnel of the Forest Service available to the Center for such administrative support, technical services, and the development and dissemination of information related to fireshed management and the Fireshed Registry as the Secretary determines necessary to carry out this section.

SEC. 103. FIRESHED REGISTRY.

(a) **FIRESHED REGISTRY.**—The Secretary, acting through the Director of the Fireshed Center appointed under section 102, shall maintain a Fireshed Registry on a publicly accessible website that provides interactive geospatial data on individual fireheds, including information on—

(1) wildfire exposure delineated by ownership, including rights-of-way for utilities and other public or private purposes;

(2) any hazardous fuels management activities that have occurred within an individual fireshed in the past 10 years;

(3) wildfire exposure with respect to such fireshed delineated by—

(A) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to communities, including risk to structures and life;

(B) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to municipal watersheds, including tribal water supplies and systems; and

(C) risk of forest conversion due to wildfire;

(4) the percentage of the fireshed that has burned in wildfires in the past 10 years, including, to the extent practicable, delineations of acres that have burned at a high severity;

(5) spatial patterns of wildfire exposure, including plausible extreme fire events; and

(6) any hazardous fuels management activities planned for the fireshed, including fireshed management projects.

(b) **COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLANS.**—The Director shall make data from the Fireshed Registry available to local communities developing or updating community wildfire protection plans.

(c) **REQUIREMENT TO MAINTAIN.**—As part of the website containing the Fireshed Registry, the Director shall—

(1) publish fireshed assessments created under section 105; and

(2) maintain a searchable database to track—
(A) the status of Federal environmental reviews, permits, and authorizations for fireshed management projects, including—

(i) a comprehensive permitting timetable;

(ii) the status of the compliance of each lead agency, cooperating agency, and participating agency with the permitting timetable with respect to such fireshed management projects;

(iii) any modifications of the permitting timetable required under clause (i), including an explanation as to why the permitting timetable was modified; and

(iv) information about project-related public meetings, public hearings, and public comment periods, which shall be presented in English and the predominant language of the community or communities most affected by the project, as that information becomes available;

(B) the projected cost of such fireshed management projects; and

(C) in the case of completed fireshed management projects, the effectiveness of such projects in reducing the wildfire exposure within an applicable fireshed, including wildfire exposure described in subparagraphs (A) through (C) of subsection (a)(3).

(d) **RELIANCE ON EXISTING ASSESSMENTS.**—In carrying out this section, the Director may rely on assessments completed or data gathered through existing partnerships, to the extent practicable.

SEC. 104. SHARED STEWARDSHIP.

(a) **JOINT AGREEMENTS.**—Not later than 90 days after receiving a written request from a Governor of a State or an Indian Tribe, the Secretary concerned shall enter into a shared stewardship agreement (or similar agreement) with such Governor or Indian Tribe to jointly—

(1) promote the reduction of wildfire exposure, based on the criteria in section 101(a)(1)(B), in fireshed management areas across jurisdictional boundaries; and

(2) conduct fireshed assessments under section 105.

(b) **ADDITIONAL FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.**—With respect to a shared stewardship agreement (or similar agreement) with a Governor of a State or an Indian Tribe entered into under subsection (a), the Secretary concerned, if requested by such Governor or Indian Tribe, may—

(1) designate additional fireshed management areas under such agreement; and

(2) update such agreement to address new wildfire threats.

SEC. 105. FIRESHED ASSESSMENTS.

(a) **FIRESHED ASSESSMENTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—Not later than 90 days after the date on which the Secretary concerned enters into an agreement with a Governor of a State or an Indian Tribe under section 104, the Secretary concerned and such Governor or Indian Tribe shall, with respect to the fireshed management areas designated in such State, jointly conduct a fireshed assessment that—

(A) identifies—

(i) using the best available science, wildfire exposure risks within each such fireshed man-

agement area, including scenario planning and wildfire hazard mapping and models; and

(ii) each at-risk community within each fireshed management area;

(B) identifies potential fireshed management projects to be carried out in such fireshed management areas, giving priority—

(i) primarily, to projects with the purpose of reducing—

(I) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to communities, including risk to structures and life;

(II) wildfire exposure and corresponding risk to municipal watersheds, including tribal water supplies and systems;

(III) risk of forest conversion due to wildfire; or

(IV) any combination of purposes described in subclauses (I) through (III); and

(ii) secondarily, to projects with the purpose of protecting—

(I) critical infrastructure, including utility infrastructure;

(II) wildlife habitats, including habitat for species listed under the Endangered Species Act (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.);

(III) the built environment, including residential and commercial buildings;

(IV) resources of an Indian Tribe, as defined by the Indian Tribe; or

(V) any combination of purposes described in subclauses (I) through (IV);

(C) includes—

(i) a strategy for reducing the threat of wildfire to at-risk communities in the wildland-urban interface on both Federal and non-Federal land;

(ii) a timeline for the implementation of fireshed management projects;

(iii) long-term benchmark goals for the completion of fireshed management projects in the highest wildfire exposure areas so that such projects contribute to the development and maintenance of healthy and resilient landscapes; and

(iv) policies to ensure fireshed management projects comply with applicable forest plans and incorporate the best available science;

(D) shall be regularly updated based on the best available science, as determined by the Secretary concerned; and

(E) shall be publicly available on a website maintained by the Secretary concerned.

(2) **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION.**—Upon the written request of a local government, the Secretary concerned and the Governor of the State in which the local government is located may allow such local government to participate in producing the fireshed assessment under paragraph (1) for such State.

(3) **INFORMATION IMPROVEMENT.**—

(A) **MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING.**—In carrying out a fireshed assessment under this subsection, the Secretary concerned may enter into memorandums of understanding with other Federal agencies or departments (including the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), States, Indian Tribes, private entities, or research or educational institutions to improve, with respect to such assessment, the use and integration of—

(i) advanced remote sensing and geospatial technologies;

(ii) statistical modeling and analysis; or

(iii) any other technology or combination of technologies and analyses that the Secretary concerned determines will benefit the quality of information of such an assessment.

(B) **BEST AVAILABLE SCIENCE.**—In using the best available science for the fireshed assessments completed under subsection (a)(1), the Secretary concerned and Governor shall, to the maximum extent practicable, incorporate—

(i) traditional ecological knowledge from Indian Tribes;

(ii) data from State forest action plans and State wildfire risk assessments;

(iii) data from the Fireshed Registry maintained under section 103; and

(iv) data from other Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments or agencies.

(b) **APPLICABILITY OF NEPA.**—Fireshed assessments conducted under this section shall not be subject to the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.).

SEC. 106. EMERGENCY FIRESHED MANAGEMENT.

(a) **FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary concerned, acting through a responsible official, shall carry out fireshed management projects in fireshed management areas designated under section 101 in accordance with this section.

(2) **FIRESHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.**—The responsible official shall carry out the following forest and vegetation management activities as fireshed management projects under this section:

(A) Conducting hazardous fuels management activities.

(B) Creating fuel breaks and fire breaks.

(C) Removing hazard trees, dead trees, dying trees, or trees at risk of dying, as determined by the responsible official.

(D) Developing, approving, or conducting routine maintenance under a vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan submitted under section 512(c)(1) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(1)).

(E) Removing trees to address overstocking or crowding in a forest stand, consistent with the appropriate basal area of the forest stand as determined by the responsible official.

(F) Using chemical or re-seeding and planting treatments to address insects and disease and control vegetation competition or invasive species.

(G) Any activities recommended by an applicable fireshed assessment carried out under section 105.

(H) Any activities recommended by an applicable community wildfire protection plan.

(I) Any combination of activities described in this paragraph.

(3) **EMERGENCY FIRESHED MANAGEMENT.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—For any fireshed management area designated under section 101, the following shall have the force and effect of law:

(i) Section 220.4(b) of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), with respect to lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary.

(ii) Section 46.150 of title 43, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act), with respect to lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior.

(iii) Section 402.05 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(iv) Section 800.12 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this Act).

(B) **UTILIZATION OF EXISTING STREAMLINED AUTHORITIES IN FIRESHED MANAGEMENT AREAS.**—

(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Fireshed management projects carried out under this section shall be considered authorized projects under the following categorical exclusions:

(I) Section 603(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591b(a)).

(II) Section 605(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591d(a)).

(III) Section 606(b) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591e(b)).

(IV) Section 40806(b) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592b(b)).

(V) Section 4(c)(4) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106-506; 114 Stat. 2353).

(VI) Subject to subsection (d) of section 40807 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592c) in the same manner as authorized emergency actions (as defined in subsection (a) of such section) are subject to such subsection.

(ii) **USE OF EXPEDITED AUTHORITIES.**—In carrying out a fireshed management project, the

Secretary shall apply a categorical exclusion under clause (i)—

(I) in a manner consistent with the statute establishing such categorical exclusion; and

(II) in any area—

(aa) designated as suitable for timber production within the applicable forest plan; or

(bb) where timber harvest activities are not prohibited.

(iii) **FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT REQUIREMENTS.**—In carrying out this section, the Secretary concerned shall ensure compliance with the amendments made to the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.) by the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2023 (Public Law 118-5).

(iv) **USE OF OTHER AUTHORITIES.**—To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary concerned shall use the authorities provided under this section in combination with other authorities to carry out firehatched management projects, including—

(I) good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) (as amended by this Act);

(II) stewardship contracting projects entered into under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) (as amended by this Act);

(III) self-determination contracts and self-governance compact agreements entered into under the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.); and

(IV) agreements entered into under the Tribal Forest Protection Act of 2004 (25 U.S.C. 3115a et seq.).

(b) **EXPANSION.**—

(1) **HFRA AMENDMENTS.**—The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 is amended—

(A) in section 603(c)(1) (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(1)), by striking “3000 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”;

(B) in section 605(c)(1) (16 U.S.C. 6591d(c)(1)), by striking “3000 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”; and

(C) in section 606(g) (16 U.S.C. 6591e(g)), by striking “4,500 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”.

(2) **INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT AND JOBS ACT AMENDMENT.**—Section 40806(d)(1) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592b(d)(1)), by striking “3,000 acres” and inserting “10,000 acres”.

(3) **LAKE TAHOE RESTORATION ACT AMENDMENTS.**—Section 4(c)(4)(C) of the Lake Tahoe Restoration Act (Public Law 106-506; 114 Stat. 2353) is amended—

(A) by striking “Lake Tahoe Basin Management Unit”; and

(B) by inserting “applicable to the area” before the period at the end.

SEC. 107. SUNSET.

The authority under this subtitle shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

Subtitle B—Expanding Collaborative Tools to Reduce Wildfire Risk and Improve Forest Health

SEC. 111. MODIFICATION OF THE TREATMENT OF CERTAIN REVENUE AND PAYMENTS UNDER GOOD NEIGHBOR AGREEMENTS.

(a) **GOOD NEIGHBOR AUTHORITY.**—Section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(6), by striking “or Indian tribe”; and

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) in paragraph (1)(A), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(B) in paragraph (2)(C)—

(i) by striking clause (i) and inserting the following:

“(i) **IN GENERAL.**—Funds received from the sale of timber or forest product by a Governor, an Indian tribe, or a county under a good neighbor agreement shall be retained and used

by the Governor, Indian tribe, or county, as applicable—

“(I) to carry out authorized restoration services under the good neighbor agreement; and

“(II) if there are funds remaining after carrying out subclause (I), to carry out authorized restoration services under other good neighbor agreements and for the administration of a good neighbor authority program by a Governor, Indian tribe, or county.”; and

(ii) in clause (ii), by striking “2024” and inserting “2029”;

(C) in paragraph (3), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(D) by striking paragraph (4).

(b) **CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.**—Section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a)) is amended—

(1) in paragraph (1)(B), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”; and

(2) in paragraph (5), by inserting “, Indian tribe,” after “Governor”.

(c) **EFFECTIVE DATE.**—The amendments made by this section apply to any project initiated pursuant to a good neighbor agreement (as defined in section 8206(a) of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a(a))—

(1) before the date of enactment of this Act, if the project was initiated after the date of enactment of the Agriculture Improvement Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-334; 132 Stat. 4490); or

(2) on or after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 112. FIXING STEWARDSHIP END RESULT CONTRACTING.

Section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b), by inserting “, including retaining and expanding existing forest products infrastructure” before the period at the end;

(2) in subsection (d)(3)(B), by striking “10 years” and inserting “20 years”; and

(3) in subsection (h), by adding at the end the following:

“(4) **SPECIAL RULE FOR LONG-TERM STEWARDSHIP CONTRACTS.**—

“(A) **IN GENERAL.**—A long-term agreement or contract entered into with an entity under subsection (b) by the Chief or the Director shall provide that in the case of the cancellation or termination by the Chief or the Director of such long-term agreement or contract, the Chief or the Director, as applicable, shall provide 10 percent of the agreement or contract amount to such entity as cancellation or termination costs.

“(B) **DEFINITION OF LONG-TERM AGREEMENT OR CONTRACT.**—In this paragraph, the term ‘long-term agreement or contract’ means an agreement or contract under subsection (b)—

“(i) with a term of more than 5 years; and

“(ii) entered into on or after the date of the enactment of this paragraph.”.

SEC. 113. INTRA-AGENCY STRIKE TEAMS.

(a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary concerned shall establish intra-agency strike teams to assist the Secretary concerned with—

(1) any reviews, including analysis under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.), consultations under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.), and consultations under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), with the intent to accelerate and streamline interagency consultation processes;

(2) the implementation of any necessary site preparation work in advance of or as part of a firehatched management project;

(3) the implementation of firehatched management projects under such section; and

(4) any combination of purposes under paragraphs (1) through (3).

(b) **MEMBERS.**—The Secretary concerned may appoint not more than 10 individuals to serve on an intra-agency strike team comprised of—

(1) employees of the Department under the jurisdiction of the Secretary concerned;

(2) employees of a different Federal agency, with the consent of that agency’s Secretary;

(3) private contractors from any nonprofit organization, State government, Indian Tribe, local government, quasi-governmental agency, academic institution, or private organization; and

(4) volunteers from any nonprofit organization, State government, Indian Tribe, local government, quasi-governmental agency, academic institution, or private organization.

(c) **SUNSET.**—The authority provided under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 114. LOCALLY-LED RESTORATION.

(a) **THRESHOLD ADJUSTMENT.**—Section 14(d) of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(d)) is amended by—

(1) striking “\$10,000” and inserting “\$55,000”; and

(2) by adding at the end the following: “Beginning on January 1, 2025, and annually thereafter, the amount in the first sentence of this subsection shall be adjusted by the Secretary for changes in the Consumer Price Index of All Urban Consumers published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor.”.

(b) **FIREHATCHED MANAGEMENT PROJECTS.**—Beginning on the date that is 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall solicit bids under section 14 of the National Forest Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 472a(d)) for firehatched management projects under section 106.

SEC. 115. JOINT CHIEFS LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM.

Section 40808 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592d) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)(2)—

(A) in subparagraph (B), by striking “or” at the end;

(B) in subparagraph (C), by striking the period at the end and inserting a semicolon; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(D) to recover from wildfires; or

“(E) to enhance soil, water, and related natural resources.”;

(2) in subsection (d)(1)—

(A) in subparagraph (A), by inserting “and post-wildfire impacts” after “wildfire risk”; and

(B) in subparagraph (F), by inserting “, as identified in the corresponding State forest action plan or similar priority plan (such as a State wildlife or water plan)” before the semicolon;

(3) in subsection (g)(2), by inserting “and at least once every 2 fiscal years thereafter” after “and 2023”; and

(4) in subsection (h)(1), by striking “and 2023” and inserting “through 2028”.

SEC. 116. COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION PROGRAM.

Section 4003 of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303) is amended—

(1) in subsection (b)(3)—

(A) in subparagraph (D), by striking “species;” and inserting “species or pathogens;”;

(B) in subparagraph (G), by striking “and” at the end;

(C) in subparagraph (H), by adding “and” after the semicolon at the end; and

(D) by adding at the end the following:

“(I) address standardized monitoring questions and indicators;”;

(2) in subsection (c)(3)(A)—

(A) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the end;

(B) in clause (ii), by adding “and” at the end; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) include a plan to provide support to collaborative processes established pursuant to subsection (b)(2).”;

(3) in subsection (d)—

(A) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (E), by striking “and” at the end;

(ii) in subparagraph (F), by striking the period at the end and inserting “; and”; and

(iii) by adding at the end the following:

“(G) proposals that seek to use innovative implementation mechanisms, including good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a);

“(H) proposals that seek to reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire or increase ecological restoration activities—

“(i) within areas across land ownerships, including State, Tribal, and private land; and

“(ii) within the wildland-urban interface (as defined in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511)); and

“(I) proposals that seek to enhance watershed health and drinking water sources.”; and

(B) in paragraph (3)—

(i) by amending subparagraph (A) to read as follows:

“(A) 4 proposals in any 1 region of the National Forest System to be funded during any fiscal year; and”;

(ii) by striking subparagraph (B); and

(iii) by redesignating subparagraph (C) as subparagraph (B); and

(4) in subsection (f)(6), by striking “2019 through 2023” and inserting “2023 through 2029”.

Subtitle C—Litigation Reform

SEC. 121. COMMONSENSE LITIGATION REFORM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—A court shall not enjoin a covered agency action if the court determines that the plaintiff is unable to demonstrate that the claim of the plaintiff is likely to succeed on the merits.

(b) BALANCING SHORT-AND LONG-TERM EFFECTS OF COVERED AGENCY ACTION IN CONSIDERING INJUNCTIVE RELIEF.—As part of its weighing the equities while considering any request for an injunction that applies to a covered agency action, the court reviewing such action shall balance the impact to the ecosystem likely affected by such action of—

(1) the short- and long-term effects of undertaking such action; against

(2) the short- and long-term effects of not undertaking such action.

(c) LIMITATIONS ON JUDICIAL REVIEW.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law (except this section), in the case of a claim arising under Federal law seeking judicial review of a covered agency action—

(A) a court shall not hold unlawful, set aside, or otherwise limit, delay, stay, vacate, or enjoin such agency action unless the court determines that—

(i) such action poses or will pose a risk of a proximate and substantial environmental harm; and

(ii) there is no other equitable remedy available as a matter of law; and

(B) if a court determines that subparagraph (A) does not apply to the covered agency action the only remedy the court may order with regard to such agency action is to remand the matter to the agency with instructions to, during the 180-day period beginning on the date of the order, take such additional actions as may be necessary to redress any legal wrong suffered by, or adverse effect on, the plaintiff, except such additional actions may not include the preparation of a new agency document unless the court finds the agency was required and failed to prepare such agency document.

(2) EFFECT OF REMAND.—In the case of a covered agency action to which paragraph (1)(B) applies, the agency may—

(A) continue to carry out such agency action to the extent the action does not impact the additional actions required pursuant to such paragraph; and

(B) if the agency action relates to an agency document, use any format to correct such document (including a supplemental environmental document, memorandum, or errata sheet).

(d) LIMITATIONS ON CLAIMS.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law (except this section), a claim arising under Federal law seek-

ing judicial review of a covered agency action shall be barred unless—

(1) with respect to an agency document or the application of a categorical exclusion noticed in the Federal Register, such claim is filed not later than 120 days after the date of publication of a notice in the Federal Register of agency intent to carry out the fireshed management project relating to such agency document or application, unless a shorter period is specified in such Federal law;

(2) in the case of an agency document or the application of a categorical exclusion not described in paragraph (1), such claim is filed not later than 120 days after the date that is the earlier of—

(A) the date on which such agency document or application is published; and

(B) the date on which such agency document or application is noticed; and

(3) in the case of a covered agency action for which there was a public comment period, such claim—

(A) is filed by a party that—

(i) participated in the administrative proceedings regarding the fireshed management project relating to such action; and

(ii) submitted a comment during such public comment period and such comment was sufficiently detailed to put the applicable agency on notice of the issue upon which the party seeks judicial review; and

(B) is related to such comment.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) AGENCY DOCUMENT.—The term “agency document” means, with respect to a fireshed management project, a record of decision, environmental document, or programmatic environmental document.

(2) COVERED AGENCY ACTION.—The term “covered agency action” means—

(A) the establishment of a fireshed management project by an agency;

(B) the application of a categorical exclusion to a fireshed management project;

(C) the preparation of any agency document for a fireshed management project; or

(D) any other agency action as part of a fireshed management project.

(3) NEPA TERMS.—The terms “categorical exclusion”, “environmental document”, and “programmatic environmental document” have the meanings given such terms, respectively, in section 111 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4336e).

SEC. 122. CONSULTATION ON FOREST PLANS.

(a) FOREST SERVICE PLANS.—Section 6(d)(2) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(d)(2)) is amended to read as follows:

“(2) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to reinitiate consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)) or section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation), on a land management plan approved, amended, or revised under this section when—

“(A) a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

“(B) new information reveals effects of the land management plan that may affect a species listed or critical habitat designated under that Act in a manner or to an extent not previously considered.”.

(b) BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS.—Section 202 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1712) is amended by adding at the end the following:

“(g) NO ADDITIONAL CONSULTATION REQUIRED UNDER CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES.—Notwithstanding any other provision of law, the Secretary shall not be required to reinitiate consultation under section 7(a)(2) of the Endan-

gered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1536(a)(2)) or section 402.16 of title 50, Code of Federal Regulations (or a successor regulation), on a land use plan approved, amended, or revised under this section when—

“(1) a new species is listed or critical habitat is designated under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.); or

“(2) new information reveals effects of the land use plan that may affect a species listed or critical habitat designated under that Act in a manner or to an extent not previously considered.”.

TITLE II—PROTECTING COMMUNITIES IN THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE

SEC. 201. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION PROGRAM.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 30 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries shall jointly establish an interagency program to be known as the “Community Wildfire Risk Reduction Program” that shall consist of at least one representative from each of the following:

(1) The Office of Wildland Fire of the Department of the Interior.

(2) The National Park Service.

(3) The Bureau of Land Management.

(4) The United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

(5) The Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(6) The Forest Service.

(7) The Federal Emergency Management Agency.

(8) The United States Fire Administration.

(9) The National Institute of Standards and Technology.

(10) The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

(b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of the program established under subsection (a) is to support interagency coordination in reducing the risk of, and the damages resulting from, wildfires in communities (including tribal communities) in the wildland-urban interface through—

(1) advancing research and science in wildfire resilience and land management, including support for non-Federal research partnerships;

(2) supporting adoption by Indian Tribes and local governmental entities of fire-resistant building methods, codes, and standards;

(3) supporting efforts by Indian Tribes or local governmental entities to address the effects of wildland fire on such communities, including property damages, air quality, and water quality;

(4) encouraging public-private partnerships to conduct hazardous fuels management activities in the wildland-urban interface;

(5) providing technical and financial assistance targeted towards communities, including tribal communities, through streamlined and unified technical assistance and grant management mechanisms, including the portal and grant application established under subsection (c), to—

(A) encourage critical risk reduction measures on private property with high wildfire risk exposure in such communities; and

(B) mitigate costs for and improve capacity among such communities.

(c) PORTAL AND UNIFORM GRANT APPLICATION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—As part of the program established under subsection (a), the Secretaries and the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall establish a portal through which a person may submit a single, uniform application for any of the following:

(A) A community wildfire defense grant under section 40803(f) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C. 6592(f)).

(B) An emergency management performance grant under section 662 of the Post-Katrina Emergency Management Reform Act of 2006 (16 U.S.C. 761).

(C) A grant under section 33 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229).

(D) A grant under section 34 of the Federal Fire Prevention and Control Act of 1974 (15 U.S.C. 2229a).

(E) Financial or technical assistance or a grant under sections 203, 205, 404, 406, or 420 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5133, 5135, 5170c, 5172, 5187).

(2) **SIMPLIFICATION OF APPLICATION.**—In establishing the portal and application under paragraph (1), the Secretaries and the Administrator shall seek to reduce the complexity and length of the application process for the grants described in paragraph (1).

(3) **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE.**—The Secretaries shall provide technical assistance to communities or persons seeking to apply for financial assistance through the portal using the application established under paragraph (1).

(d) **COLLABORATION AND NONDUPLICATION.**—In carrying out the program established under section (a), the Secretaries shall ensure collaboration and nonduplication of activities with the Building Technologies Office of the Department of Energy.

(e) **SUNSET.**—The program established under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 202. COMMUNITY WILDFIRE DEFENSE RESEARCH PROGRAM.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretaries shall, acting jointly, expand the Joint Fire Science Program to include a performance-driven research and development program known as the “Community Wildfire Defense Research Program” for the purpose of testing and advancing innovative designs to create or improve the wildfire-resistance of structures and communities.

(b) **PROGRAM PRIORITIES.**—In carrying out the program established under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall evaluate opportunities to create wildfire-resistant structures and communities through—

(1) different affordable building materials, including mass timber;

(2) home hardening, including policies to incentivize and incorporate defensible space;

(3) subdivision design and other land use planning and design;

(4) landscape architecture; and

(5) other wildfire-resistant designs, as determined by the Secretary.

(c) **COMMUNITY WILDFIRE DEFENSE INNOVATION PRIZE.**—

(1) **IN GENERAL.**—In carrying out the program established under subsection (a), the Secretaries shall carry out a competition through which a person may submit to the Secretaries innovative designs for the creation or improvement of an ignition-resistant structure or fire-adapted communities.

(2) **PRIZE.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, the Secretaries may award a prize under the competition described in paragraph (1), based on criteria established by the Secretaries and in accordance with paragraph (3).

(3) **SCALE.**—In awarding a prize under paragraph (2), the Secretaries shall prioritize for an award designs with the most potential to scale to existing infrastructure.

(d) **SUNSET.**—The program established under subsection (a) shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 203. VEGETATION MANAGEMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE RELATING TO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITY RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

(a) **HAZARD TREES WITHIN 150 FEET OF ELECTRIC POWER LINE.**—Section 512(a)(1)(B)(ii) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(a)(1)(B)(ii)) is amended by striking “10” and inserting “150”.

(b) **CONSULTATION WITH PRIVATE LANDOWNERS.**—Section 512(c)(3)(E) of such Act (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(3)(E)) is amended—

(1) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the end; (2) in clause (ii), by striking the period and inserting “; and”; and

(3) by adding at the end the following:

“(iii) consulting with a private landowner with respect to any hazard trees identified for removal from land owned by the private landowner.”.

(c) **REVIEW AND APPROVAL PROCESS.**—Section 512(c)(4)(A)(iv) of such Act (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(4)(A)(iv)) is amended to read as follows:

“(iv) ensures that—

“(1) a plan submitted without a modification under clause (iii) shall be automatically approved 120 days after being submitted; and

“(1) with respect to a plan submitted with a modification under clause (iii), if not approved within 120 days after being submitted, the Secretary concerned shall develop and submit a letter to the owner and operator describing—

“(aa) a detailed timeline (to conclude within 165 days after the submission of the plan) for completing review of the plan;

“(bb) any identified deficiencies with the plan and specific opportunities for the owner and operator to address such deficiencies; and

“(cc) any other relevant information, as determined by the Secretary concerned.”.

SEC. 204. CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION FOR ELECTRIC UTILITY LINES RIGHTS-OF-WAY.

(a) **CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ESTABLISHED.**—Forest management activities described in subsection (b) are a category of activities hereby designated as being categorically excluded from the preparation of an environmental assessment or an environmental impact statement under section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332).

(b) **FOREST MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES DESIGNATED FOR CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.**—The forest management activities designated under subsection (a) for a categorical exclusion are—

(1) the development and approval of a vegetation management, facility inspection, and operation and maintenance plan submitted under section 512(c)(1) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1772(c)(1)) by the Secretary concerned; and

(2) the implementation of routine activities conducted under the plan referred to in paragraph (1).

(c) **AVAILABILITY OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.**—On and after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned may use the categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) in accordance with this section.

(d) **EXCLUSION OF CERTAIN AREAS FROM CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION.**—The categorical exclusion established under subsection (a) shall not apply to any forest management activity conducted—

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

(2) on National Forest System lands on which the removal of vegetation is restricted or prohibited by an Act of Congress.

(e) **PERMANENT ROADS.**—

(1) **PROHIBITION ON ESTABLISHMENT.**—A forest management activity designated under subsection (b) shall not include the establishment of a permanent road.

(2) **EXISTING ROADS.**—The Secretary concerned may carry out necessary maintenance and repair on an existing permanent road for the purposes of conducting a forest management activity designated under subsection (b).

(3) **TEMPORARY ROADS.**—The Secretary concerned shall decommission any temporary road constructed for carrying out a forest management activity designated under subsection (b) not later than the date that is 3 years after the date on which the forest management activity is completed.

(f) **APPLICABLE LAWS.**—Clauses (iii) and (iv) of section 106(a)(3) shall apply to forest management activities designated under subsection (b).

SEC. 205. SEEDS OF SUCCESS.

(a) **STRATEGY ESTABLISHED.**—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act,

the Secretaries and the Secretary of Defense shall jointly develop and implement a strategy, to be known as the “Seeds of Success strategy”, to enhance the domestic supply chain of seeds.

(b) **ELEMENTS.**—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall include a plan for each of the following:

(1) Facilitating sustained interagency coordination in, and a comprehensive approach to, native plant materials development and restoration.

(2) Promoting the re-seeding of native or fire-resistant vegetation post-wildfire, particularly in the wildland-urban interface.

(3) Creating and consolidating information on native or fire-resistant vegetation and sharing such information with State governments, Indian Tribes, and local governments.

(4) Building regional programs and partnerships to promote the development of materials made from plants native to the United States and restore such plants to their respective, native habitats within the United States, giving priority to the building of such programs and partnerships in regions of the Bureau of Land Management where such partnerships and programs do not already exist as of the date of enactment of this Act.

(5) Expanding seed storage and seed-cleaning infrastructure.

(6) Expanding the Warehouse System of the Bureau of Land Management, particularly the cold storage capacity of the Warehouse System.

(7) Shortening the timeline for the approval of permits to collect seeds on public lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

(c) **REPORT.**—The Secretaries and the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees the strategy developed under paragraph (1).

TITLE III—TRANSPARENCY AND TECHNOLOGY

SEC. 301. BIOCHAR INNOVATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR CONSERVATION, HEALTH, AND ADVANCEMENTS IN RESEARCH.

(a) **DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.**—

(1) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—

(A) **IN GENERAL.**—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the covered Secretaries shall establish a program to enter into partnerships with eligible entities to carry out demonstration projects to support the development and commercialization of biochar in accordance with this subsection.

(B) **LOCATION OF DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS.**—In carrying out the program established under subparagraph (A), the covered Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent practicable, enter into partnerships with eligible entities such that not fewer than one demonstration project is carried out in each region of the Forest Service and each region of the Bureau of Land Management.

(2) **PROPOSALS.**—To be eligible to enter into a partnership to carry out a biochar demonstration project under paragraph (1)(A), an eligible entity shall submit to the covered Secretaries a proposal at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the covered Secretaries may require.

(3) **PRIORITY.**—In selecting proposals under paragraph (2), the covered Secretaries shall give priority to entering into partnerships with eligible entities that submit proposals to carry out biochar demonstration projects that—

(A) have the most carbon sequestration potential;

(B) have the most potential to create new jobs and contribute to local economies, particularly in rural areas;

(C) have the most potential to demonstrate—

(i) new and innovative uses of biochar;

(ii) market viability for cost effective biochar-based products;

(iii) the ecosystem services created or supported by the use of biochar;

(iv) the restorative benefits of biochar with respect to forest health and resiliency, including forest soils and watersheds; or

(v) any combination of purposes specified in clauses (i) through (iv); and

(D) are located in areas that have a high need for biochar production, as determined by the covered Secretaries, due to—

(i) nearby lands identified as having high or very high or extreme risk of wildfire;

(ii) availability of sufficient quantities of feedstocks;

(iii) a high level of demand for biochar or other commercial byproducts of biochar; or

(iv) any combination of purposes specified in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(4) USE OF FUNDS.—In carrying out the program established under paragraph (1)(A), the covered Secretaries may enter into partnerships and provide funding to such partnerships to carry out demonstration projects to—

(A) acquire and test various feedstocks and their efficacy;

(B) develop and optimize commercially and technologically viable biochar production units, including mobile and permanent units;

(C) demonstrate—

(i) the production of biochar from forest residue; and

(ii) the use of biochar to restore forest health and resiliency;

(D) build, expand, or establish biochar facilities;

(E) conduct research on new and innovative uses of biochar;

(F) demonstrate cost-effective market opportunities for biochar and biochar-based products;

(G) carry out any other activities the covered Secretaries determine appropriate; or

(H) any combination of the purposes specified in subparagraphs (A) through (F).

(5) FEEDSTOCK REQUIREMENTS.—To the maximum extent practicable, an eligible entity that carries out a biochar demonstration project under this subsection shall, with respect to the feedstock used under such project, derive at least 50 percent of such feedstock from forest thinning and management activities, including mill residues, conducted on National Forest System lands or public lands.

(6) REVIEW OF BIOCHAR DEMONSTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The covered Secretaries shall conduct regionally-specific research, including economic analyses and life-cycle assessments, on any biochar produced from a demonstration project carried out under the program established in paragraph (1)(A), including—

(i) the effects of such biochar on—

(I) forest health and resiliency;

(II) carbon capture and sequestration, including increasing soil carbon in the short-term and long-term;

(III) productivity, reduced input costs, and water retention in agricultural practices;

(IV) the health of soil and grasslands used for grazing activities, including grazing activities on National Forest System land and public land;

(V) environmental remediation activities, including abandoned mine land remediation; and

(VI) other ecosystem services created or supported by the use of biochar;

(ii) the effectiveness of biochar as a co-product of biofuels or in biochemicals; and

(iii) the effectiveness of other potential uses of biochar to determine if any such use is technologically and commercially viable.

(B) COORDINATION.—The covered Secretaries shall, to the maximum extent practicable, provide data, analyses, and other relevant information collected under subparagraph (A) with recipients of a grant under subsection (b).

(7) LIMITATION ON FUNDING FOR ESTABLISHING BIOCHAR FACILITIES.—If the covered Secretaries provide to an eligible entity that enters into a

partnership with the covered Secretaries under paragraph (1)(A) funding for establishing a biochar facility, such funding may not exceed 35 percent of the total capital cost of establishing such biochar facility.

(b) BIOCHAR RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT GRANT PROGRAM.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy, shall establish or expand an existing applied biochar research and development grant program to make competitive grants to eligible institutions to carry out the activities described in paragraph (3).

(2) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to receive a grant under this subsection, an eligible institution shall submit to the Secretary a proposal at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(3) USE OF FUNDS.—An eligible institution that receives a grant under this subsection shall use the grant funds to conduct applied research on—

(A) the effect of biochar on forest health and resiliency, accounting for variations in biochar, soil, climate, and other factors;

(B) the effect of biochar on soil health and water retention, accounting for variations in biochar, soil, climate, and other factors;

(C) the long-term carbon sequestration potential of biochar;

(D) the best management practices with respect to biochar and biochar-based products that maximize—

(i) carbon sequestration benefits; and

(ii) the commercial viability and application of such products in forestry, agriculture, environmental remediation, water quality improvement, and any other similar uses, as determined by the Secretary;

(E) the regional uses of biochar to increase productivity and profitability, including—

(i) uses in agriculture and environmental remediation; and

(ii) use as a co-product in fuel production;

(F) new and innovative uses for biochar by-products; and

(G) opportunities to expand markets for biochar and create related jobs, particularly in rural areas.

(c) REPORTS.—

(1) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the covered Secretaries shall submit to Congress a report that—

(A) includes policy and program recommendations to improve the widespread use of biochar;

(B) identifies any area of research needed to advance biochar commercialization; and

(C) identifies barriers to further biochar commercialization, including permitting and siting considerations.

(2) MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.—Beginning with the second fiscal year that begins after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter until the date described in subsection (d), the covered Secretaries shall include in the materials submitted to Congress in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report describing, for the fiscal year covered by the report, the status of each demonstration project carried out under subsection (a) and each research and development grant carried out under subsection (b).

(d) SUNSET.—The authority to carry out this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) BIOCHAR.—The term “biochar” means carbonized biomass produced by converting feedstock through reductive thermal processing for non-fuel uses.

(2) ELIGIBLE ENTITY.—The term “eligible entity” means—

(A) a State, local, or Tribal government;

(B) an eligible institution; or

(C) a private, non-private, or cooperative entity or organization;

(D) a National Laboratory (as such term is defined in section 2 of the Energy Policy Act of 2005 (42 U.S.C. 15801)); or

(E) a partnership or consortium of two or more entities described in subparagraphs (A) through (D).

(3) ELIGIBLE INSTITUTION.—The term “eligible institution” means land-grant colleges and universities, including institutions eligible for funding under the—

(A) Act of July 2, 1862 (12 Stat. 503, chapter 130; 7 U.S.C. 301 et seq.);

(B) Act of August 30, 1890 (26 Stat. 417, chapter 841; 7 U.S.C. 321 et seq.), including Tuskegee University;

(C) Public Law 87-788 (commonly known as the “McIntire-Stennis Act of 1962”); or

(D) Equity in Educational Land-Grant Status Act of 1994 (7 U.S.C. 301 note; Public Law 103-382).

(4) FEEDSTOCK.—The term “feedstock” means excess biomass in the form of plant matter or materials that serves as the raw material for the production of biochar.

(5) COVERED SECRETARIES.—The term “covered Secretaries” means—

(A) the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service;

(B) the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Director of the Bureau of Land Management; and

(C) the Secretary of Energy, acting through the Director of the Office of Science.

SEC. 302. ACCURATE HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORTS.

(a) INCLUSION OF HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION REPORT IN MATERIALS SUBMITTED IN SUPPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S BUDGET.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Beginning with the first fiscal year that begins after the date of enactment of this Act, and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary concerned shall include in the materials submitted to Congress in support of the President's budget pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United States Code, a report on the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the preceding fiscal year.

(2) REQUIREMENTS.—For purposes of the report required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall—

(A) in determining the number of acres of Federal land on which the Secretary concerned carried out hazardous fuels reduction activities during the period covered by the report—

(i) record acres of Federal land on which hazardous fuels reduction activities were completed during such period; and

(ii) record each acre described in clause (i) once in the report, regardless of whether multiple hazardous fuels reduction activities were carried out on such acre during such period; and

(B) with respect to the acres of Federal land recorded in the report, include information on—

(i) which such acres are located in the wildland-urban interface;

(ii) the level of wildfire risk (high, moderate, or low) on the first and last day of the period covered by the report;

(iii) the types of hazardous fuels activities completed for such acres, delineating between whether such activities were conducted—

(I) in a wildfire managed for resource benefits; or

(II) through a planned project;

(iv) the cost per acre of hazardous fuels activities carried out during the period covered by the report;

(v) the region or system unit in which the acres are located; and

(vi) the effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire.

(3) TRANSPARENCY.—The Secretary concerned shall make each report submitted under paragraph (1) publicly available on the websites of

the Department of Agriculture and the Department of the Interior, as applicable.

(b) ACCURATE DATA COLLECTION.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 90 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned shall implement standardized procedures for tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned.

(2) ELEMENTS.—The standardized procedures required under paragraph (1) shall include—

(A) regular, standardized data reviews of the accuracy and timely input of data used to track hazardous fuels reduction activities;

(B) verification methods that validate whether such data accurately correlates to the hazardous fuels reduction activities carried out by the Secretary concerned;

(C) an analysis of the short- and long-term effectiveness of the hazardous fuels reduction activities on reducing the risk of wildfire; and

(D) for hazardous fuels reduction activities that occur partially within the wildland-urban interface, methods to distinguish which acres are located within the wildland-urban interface and which acres are located outside the wildland-urban interface.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 2 weeks after implementing the standardized procedures required under paragraph (1), the Secretary concerned shall submit to Congress a report that describes—

(A) such standardized procedures; and

(B) program and policy recommendations to Congress to address any limitations in tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under this subsection.

(c) GAO STUDY.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study on the implementation of this section, including any limitations with respect to—

(A) reporting hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (a); or

(B) tracking data related to hazardous fuels reduction activities under subsection (b); and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study under paragraph (1).

(d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION ACTIVITY.—The term “hazardous fuels reduction activity”—

(A) means any vegetation management activity to reduce the risk of wildfire, including mechanical treatments and prescribed burning; and

(B) does not include the awarding of contracts to conduct hazardous fuels reduction activities.

(2) FEDERAL LANDS.—The term “Federal lands” means lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture.

(e) NO ADDITIONAL FUNDS AUTHORIZED.—No additional funds are authorized to carry out the requirements of this section, and the activities authorized by this section are subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purposes.

SEC. 303. PUBLIC-PRIVATE WILDFIRE TECHNOLOGY DEPLOYMENT AND DEMONSTRATION PARTNERSHIP.

(a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED AGENCY.—The term “covered agency” means—

(A) each Federal land management agency (as such term is defined in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act (16 U.S.C. 6801));

(B) the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration;

(C) the United States Fire Administration;

(D) the Federal Emergency Management Agency;

(E) the National Aeronautics and Space Administration;

(F) the Bureau of Indian Affairs;

(G) the Department of Defense;

(H) a State, Tribal, county, or municipal fire department or district operating through the

United States Fire Administration or pursuant to an agreement with a Federal agency; and

(I) any other Federal agency involved in wildfire response.

(2) COVERED ENTITY.—The term “covered entity” means—

(A) a private entity;

(B) a nonprofit organization; or

(C) an institution of higher education (as defined in section 101 of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001)).

(b) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretaries, in coordination with the heads of the covered agencies, shall establish a deployment and demonstration pilot program (in this section referred to as “Pilot Program”) for new and innovative wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation technologies.

(c) FUNCTIONS.—In carrying out the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall—

(1) incorporate the Pilot Program into the National Wildfire Coordinating Group;

(2) in consultation with the heads of covered agencies, identify and advance the demonstration and deployment of key technology priority areas with respect to wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation technologies, including—

(A) hazardous fuels reduction treatments or activities;

(B) dispatch communications;

(C) remote sensing, detection, and tracking;

(D) safety equipment; and

(E) common operating pictures or operational dashboards; and

(3) connect each covered entity selected to participate in the Pilot Program with the appropriate covered agency to coordinate real-time and on-the-ground testing of technology during wildland fire mitigation activities and training.

(d) APPLICATIONS.—To be eligible to be selected to participate in the Pilot Program, a covered entity shall submit to the Secretaries an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretaries may require, including a proposal to demonstrate technologies specific to the key technology priority areas identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2).

(e) PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.—In selecting covered entities to participate in the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall give priority to covered entities—

(1) that have participated in the Fire Weather Testbed of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; or

(2) developing and applying emerging technologies for wildfire mitigation, including artificial intelligence, quantum sensing, computing and quantum-hybrid applications, augmented reality, 5G private networks, and device-to-device communications supporting nomadic mesh networks.

(f) OUTREACH.—The Secretaries, in coordination with the heads of covered agencies, shall make public the key technology priority areas identified pursuant to subsection (c)(2) and invite covered entities to apply under subsection (d) to test and demonstrate their technologies to address such priority areas.

(g) REPORTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter for the duration of the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees, the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives, and the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate a report that includes, with respect to the Pilot Program, the following:

(1) A list of participating covered entities.

(2) A brief description of the technologies deployed and demonstrated by each such covered entity.

(3) An estimate of the cost of acquiring each such technology and applying the technology at scale.

(4) Outreach efforts by Federal agencies to covered entities developing wildfire technologies.

(5) Assessments of, and recommendations relating to, new technologies with potential adoption and application at-scale in Federal land management agencies’ wildfire prevention, detection, communication, and mitigation efforts.

(6) A description of the relationship and coordination between the Pilot Program and the activities of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, including the Fire Weather Testbed.

(h) SUNSET.—The authority to carry out this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

SEC. 304. GAO STUDY ON FOREST SERVICE POLICIES.

Not later than 3 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall—

(1) conduct a study evaluating—

(A) the effectiveness of Forest Service wildland firefighting operations;

(B) transparency and accountability measures in the Forest Service’s budget and accounting process; and

(C) the suitability and feasibility of establishing a new Federal agency with the responsibility of responding and suppressing wildland fires on Federal lands; and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

SEC. 305. FOREST SERVICE WESTERN HEADQUARTERS STUDY.

Not later than 5 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Chief of the Forest Service shall—

(1) conduct a study evaluating—

(A) potential locations for a Western headquarters for the Forest Service, including potential locations in at least 3 different States located west of the Mississippi river; and

(B) the potential benefits of creating a Western headquarters for the Forest Service, including expected—

(i) improvements to customer service;

(ii) improvements to employee recruitment and retention; and

(iii) operational efficiencies and cost savings; and

(2) submit to Congress a report that describes the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

SEC. 306. KEEPING FOREST PLANS CURRENT AND MONITORED.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary—

(1) to the greatest extent practicable and subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose—

(A) ensure forest plans comply with the requirements of section 6(f)(5)(A) of the Forest and Rangeland Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)(A)); and

(B) prioritize revising any forest plan not in compliance with such section 6(f)(5)(A);

(2) not be considered to be in violation of section 6(f)(5)(A) of the Forest and Rangeland Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1604(f)(5)(A)) solely because more than 15 years have passed without revision of the plan for a unit of the National Forest System;

(3) not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, submit to the relevant Congressional Committees the date on which each forest plan required by such section 6 was most recently revised, amended, or modified;

(4) seek to publish a new, complete version of a forest plan that the Secretary has been directed to amend, revise, or modify by a court order within 60 days of such amendment, revision, or modification, subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose; and

(5) maintain a central, publicly accessible website with links to—

(A) the most recently available forest plan adopted, amended, or modified by a court order as a single document; and

(B) the most recently published forest plan monitoring report for each unit of the National Forest System.

(b) **GOOD FAITH UPDATES.**—If the Secretary is not acting expeditiously and in good faith, within the funding available to revise, amend, or modify a plan for a unit of the National Forest System as required by law or a court order, subsection (a) shall be void with respect to such plan and a court of proper jurisdiction may order completion of the plan on an accelerated basis.

(c) **REPORT.**—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit a report to the relevant Congressional Committees summarizing the implementation of this section.

The Acting CHAIR. No further amendment to the bill, as amended, shall be in order except those printed in part D of House Report 118–705.

Each such further amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, by the Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question.

AMENDMENT NO. 1 OFFERED BY MR. MOLINARO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 1 printed in part D of House Report 118–705.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 21, line 10, strike “and”.

Page 21, line 14, insert “and” after the semicolon.

Page 21, after line 14, insert the following: (v) a strategy for reducing the threat of wildfire to improve the effectiveness of wildland firefighting, particularly the effectiveness of fuels treatments that would improve wildland firefighter safety during wildfires;

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Chairman, I rise today to support and speak briefly on my amendment, which seeks to highlight the importance of protecting our wildland firefighters by considering strategies to mitigate health risks to them.

As we witness the increasing devastation caused by wildfires across our country, we cannot and should not overlook the heroic efforts of those brave men and women who fight them. They risk their lives on the front lines, protect their communities and natural landscapes, facing extreme danger in unpredictable environments, and often working long hours in extremely hazardous conditions.

Unfortunately, though, there are times that their protection and well-being can be seen as an afterthought. I extend my appreciation to the gen-

tleman from California (Mr. HARDER) for his work on this amendment. Our bipartisan amendment seeks to consider strategies that would enhance wildland firefighter safety in the fire assessment.

Providing Federal assistance to States to augment these plans will only reduce wildfire exposure risks. As a member of my own local fire department, I too understand the great sacrifice that too many certainly make on our behalf. Addressing firefighter safety is not something we can do in isolation. It requires cooperation from all levels of government.

Our amendment is just one step forward. We need to continue to push for bipartisan solutions that prioritize the safety of wildland firefighters, and this is a fight that transcends, of course, party lines because the lives of those brave men and women who fight the fires and their safety are at stake.

I express my appreciation to Chairman WESTERMAN and Representative HARDER for their work on this bill.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition to the amendment, even though I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment.

I congratulate my colleague, Representative HARDER, for getting it made in order for consideration today, but I do want to take this opportunity to comment on the overall process we have seen on the underlying bill.

This amendment is an example of the sort of thing we could have figured out months ago if Republican leaders had not insisted on such a rushed, chaotic process for this bill.

The hearing was on a discussion draft, which meant that it happened without testimony from one of the affected Federal departments. Then my Republican colleagues ignored extensive technical assistance and red flags provided by the Department of the Interior and by the Forest Service.

I emphasize again: I am not even talking about policy differences here. I am talking about serious concerns that the bill doesn't make sense.

Unfortunately, the sponsor ignored those red flags. Throughout the process, committee Democrats have asked to be included so that we could try to reach consensus on this bill.

We could have made suggestions, such as this amendment before us. We could have offered improvements to address the administration's concerns, but we were excluded. Now we are here with a bill that doesn't comply with the Republican Conference's own CutGo protocols and that, as of this morning, didn't even have a CBO score.

Finally, for anyone who missed this earlier, Republicans accidentally made

in order an amendment drafted so badly that it would strike the bill entirely and replace it with a non-controversial bill that Democrats support. That sounded good to me, but Republicans had to come to us this morning to ask for our help in fixing that mistake.

Here is the bottom line: I am not opposed to this amendment, but, unfortunately, it won't be enough to make a bad bill, created through a bad process, into a good one. Maybe we could have gotten there with an inclusive process, but that is not the path my colleagues on the other side of the aisle chose, and that is where we are today.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. MOLINARO. Mr. Chairman, I appreciate my colleague's support for our amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield the balance of my time to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this bipartisan amendment offered by my colleague from New York (Mr. MOLINARO), and the gentleman from California (Mr. HARDER).

This amendment ensures that each fire assessment required by the bill also includes consideration of a strategy to reduce the threat that wildfires pose to wildfire firefighters' health and safety.

Specifically, the amendment requires that fire assessments analyze the effectiveness of fuel treatments that would improve both the efficacy of wildland firefighting and the safety of wildland firefighters.

Fire assessments are a strategic tool for gauging or reducing the risk of wildfire in high-risk areas. By targeting treatments in the right areas, we can protect communities and put firefighters into winnable situations where they can effectively battle wildfires.

This amendment focuses on a crucial dimension of the wildfire crisis; namely, the safety of the brave men and women who regularly put themselves in danger to combat raging wildfires.

The amendment correctly identifies fuel treatments as a meaningful way to accomplish this goal, as proactively treated areas can slow the advancing wildfires and give firefighters precious time to safely combat an approaching blaze.

Mr. Chair, I appreciate the bipartisan collaboration reflected in this amendment. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to oppose the underlying bill, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. MOLINARO).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 2 OFFERED BY MR. LAMALFA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 2 printed in part D of House Report 118–705.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

After section 116 insert the following:
SEC. 117. UTILIZING GRAZING FOR WILDFIRE RISK REDUCTION.

The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, in coordination with holders of permits to graze livestock on Federal land, shall develop a strategy to increase opportunities to utilize livestock grazing as a wildfire risk reduction strategy, including—

(1) completion of reviews (as required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (U.S.C. 4321 et seq.)) to allow permitted grazing on vacant grazing allotments during instances of drought, wildfire, or other natural disasters that disrupt grazing on allotments already permitted;

(2) use of targeted grazing;

(3) increased use of temporary permits to promote targeted fuels reduction and reduction of invasive annual grasses;

(4) increased use of grazing as a postfire recovery and restoration strategy, where appropriate; and

(5) use of all applicable authorities under the law.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Chairman, for my colleague from California (Ms. PORTER), I have an amendment that should raise the balance to loving this bill.

Mr. Chair, as part of the Fix Our Forests Act, I have been able to add my amendment, which is contained in H.R. 7666. It directs the Forest Service to expand the use of utilizing targeted animal grazing in fuels management programs to reduce wildfire risk.

It will make the use of grazing to reduce fine fuels found in forest floors and the meadows near them, which make fires burn hotter, faster, and more dangerously. Utilizing livestock for fire fuel management is common sense, and it has been practiced for many years. It is being curtailed by more and more difficult permitting processes in more recent years.

It is a very important tool that, unfortunately, is not being utilized enough, whether it is cattle on the vast plains and areas around our forested areas, sheep, or, as we have seen success, even in urban areas, people hiring goatherds to come in and clean those difficult areas that are hard for people themselves to get in, such as along riverbanks and places like that.

□ 1530

We know this tool works well in order to curb that flammable material.

The West continues to face a wildfire and a forest health crisis. In California, as we have listed out here today, we have seen many firsthand instances of fire that are just unbelievably large and devastating. It is even more increasing in later fire seasons here.

I can talk about my district itself and the catastrophic damage we have had. The Camp fire in Paradise was over 100,000 acres, but key to that argument is the loss of 85 lives in that devastating fire. The North Complex, my colleague from Arkansas mentioned earlier, has consumed portions of Forbestown and Berry Creek, and it was over 318,000 acres. Then, we had, later on, the million-acre Dixie fire. Most recently, the Park fire, which started in a park near Chico, ended up consuming right under 430,000 acres.

These are all six- and seven-digit numbers that have burned right in my backyard, in just one district, and over 2 million acres in just a few short years, with the Park fire being now the fifth largest in California history.

Seven million acres have burned in the Western States this year. This legislation is important across many fire-prone areas.

Herd agencies are limited in the scope of tools they can consider, and often the post-fire teams bear the burden of suggesting creative tools, like livestock grazing.

This isn't creative. This is actually well-known. If they want to call it creative, I am for anything that will get us to use this tool even more.

My amendment would enhance the intent of the Fix Our Forests Act and help with preventing more catastrophic and preventable fires. It is known to work.

Mr. Chair, I also thank my friend, Mr. VASQUEZ, for his support with this legislation as we partner on this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. PERRY). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment, and I have worked collaboratively with my colleague, Mr. LAMALFA, across the aisle on wildfire issues. I will also congratulate my Democratic colleague, Representative VASQUEZ, for getting this amendment made in order.

I do want to register the same concerns that I have expressed before. The process on the Fix Our Forests Act has been a total black box. A good amendment or two does not change the overall bill, which would gut bedrock environmental laws.

Committee Democrats have asked again and again to try to work together to reach consensus on this bill, and it would have been a great opportunity to talk about this amendment, which, again, I do not oppose.

Mr. Chair, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from New Mexico (Mr. VASQUEZ), my colleague.

Mr. VASQUEZ. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment with Representative LAMALFA.

New Mexicans know all too well how disastrous wildfires can be for our families, homes, private property, culture, and tradition. We need to use every tool in our toolbox to lessen the frequency and severity of wildfires.

Livestock grazing can help us accomplish that goal. Grazing targeted areas can help slow the spread of an intense burn and control the temperature of a fire by reducing the amount of flammable organic fuel.

This bipartisan amendment adds the text of our bill, the Utilizing Grazing for Wildfire Risk Reduction Act, to the proposed legislation. This amendment ensures that grazing is a tool that can be used proactively to prevent wildfires and keep New Mexicans safe. It helps cut through red tape and makes it easier for ranchers to assist in preventing devastating wildfires that destroy our lands, culture, and livelihood.

I appreciate Congressman LAMALFA for working with me on this important bipartisan amendment that uses a commonsense approach to reduce the threat of wildfires. We know that the cost of fighting wildland fires is astronomical, so we must use every available resource to prevent future natural and human-caused disasters.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA). The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 3, AS MODIFIED, OFFERED BY
 MR. VALADAO

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 3, as modified, printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment, as modified.

The text of the amendment, as modified, is as follows:

AMENDMENT NO. 3, AS MODIFIED, OFFERED BY
 MR. VALADAO OF CALIFORNIA

At the end of Title III add the following:
SEC. 307 CONTAINER AERIAL FIREFIGHTING SYSTEM (CAFFS).

(a) EVALUATION.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such system to mitigate and suppress wildfires.

(b) REPORT.—Not later than 120 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board, shall jointly submit to the appropriate committees a report that includes the results of the evaluation required under subsection (a).

(c) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES DEFINED.—In this section, the term "appropriate committees" means—(1) the Committees on Agriculture and Natural Resources of the House

of Representatives; and (2) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry and Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN and his staff at the Natural Resources Committee for their work on this very important bill. I appreciate his partnership and work to ensure my amendment was included today.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support my amendment, which would dramatically increase the number of airlift assets available for wildfire emergencies.

Containerized Aerial Firefighting Systems, or CAFFS, are airdrop-capable disposable containers for water or fire retardant, which can be dropped from much higher altitudes and with less visibility than current aerial firefighting operations. Current aerial firefighting operations depend on single-mission aircraft, but CAFFS can be used by any standard cargo plane.

The use of CAFFS provides more coverage for firefighters on the ground and allows teams to quickly respond to prevent smaller fires from becoming uncontrollable. These systems are being used in other countries, but not here in the United States. We have the technology that we can deploy to stop the devastation these fires cause, and we should be using it.

Mr. Chair, I urge all of my colleagues to support the passage of this amendment to help combat and contain wildfires in a quicker and more efficient way.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment. As corrected, it would add a bill that we previously passed in the Natural Resources Committee by unanimous consent and then here on the floor on suspension by a voice vote.

I say I am not opposed to this amendment as corrected because this is the amendment that I referenced earlier. The amendment that Republicans accidentally made in order, a version of this amendment that was drafted so badly that would have deleted the entire text of the Fix Our Forests Act.

In other words, it wouldn't have just added Mr. VALADAO's bill to the overall legislation. It would have deleted the overall bill and replaced it with Mr.

VALADAO's bill, which, as I noted, is a noncontroversial bill that Democrats support.

Republicans came to Democrats this morning to ask for our help in fixing that mistake. My concern here is that that is reflective of a process problem: the sloppy drafting in the underlying bill, the refusal to incorporate well-intentioned feedback from the administration, and the exclusion of committee Democrats from developing this bill.

This is bad process.

I am not opposed to this amendment, which already passed the House floor on suspension, but one good amendment is not enough to fix the bad bill.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of the amendment offered by Mr. VALADAO of California.

This amendment does require the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct an evaluation of the container aerial firefighting system to assess the use of such a system to mitigate and suppress wildfires. The Secretaries must conduct this evaluation in consultation with the National Interagency Aviation Committee and the Interagency Airtanker Board.

As we attempt to combat the devastating wildfire crisis, it is essential that agencies like the U.S. Forest Service are utilizing all available technologies to suppress wildfires. The technology supported by this amendment involves disposable containers that are dropped with water or fire retardant, which could potentially decrease the response time to fires and increase the number of aircraft available for firefighting duties.

While the technology is not new, the wildland firefighting agencies have not actively studied it. This amendment, therefore, would ensure that our wildland firefighting agencies are fully informed about both the effectiveness and potential cost savings of this important technology.

Mr. Chair, again, I thank Representative VALADAO for his work on this amendment. Throughout the drafting process, he has continually advocated for the interests of those in his district and correctly emphasized the importance of leveraging all available technology and resources to better protect vulnerable communities.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the legislation.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment, as modified, offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

The amendment, as modified, was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 4 OFFERED BY MR. GARAMENDI

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 4 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 8, after line 8, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

(18) SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The term “special district” means a political subdivision of a State that—

(A) has significant budgetary autonomy or control;

(B) was created by or pursuant to the laws of the State for the purpose of performing a limited and specific governmental or proprietary function; and

(C) is distinct from any other local government unit within the State.

Page 29, before line 1, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent subparagraphs accordingly):

(A) in section 3 (16 U.S.C. 6502), by inserting at the end the following:

“(3) LOCAL GOVERNMENT.—The term ‘local government’ means a county, municipality, or special district.

“(4) SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The term ‘special district’ means a political subdivision of a State that—

“(A) has significant budgetary autonomy or control;

“(B) was created by or pursuant to the laws of the State for the purpose of performing a limited and specific governmental or proprietary function; and

“(C) is distinct from any other local government unit within the State.”.

Page 30, line 15, strike “and”.

Page 30, after line 15, insert the following (and redesignate subsequent paragraphs accordingly):

(2) in subsection (a), by inserting the following:

“(11) SPECIAL DISTRICT.—The term ‘special district’ means a political subdivision of a State that—

“(A) has significant budgetary autonomy or control;

“(B) was created by or pursuant to the laws of the State for the purpose of performing a limited and specific governmental or proprietary function; and

“(C) is distinct from any other local government unit within the State.”.

Page 30, line 18, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 30, line 24, insert “a special district,” after “Indian tribe.”.

Page 31, line 2, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 31, line 12, insert “special district,” after “Indian tribe.”.

Page 31, line 17, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 31, line 23, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 31, line 25, insert “special district,” after “tribe.”.

Page 65, line 11, insert “special district,” after “local.”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. GARAMENDI. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my amendment and the underlying bill.

I thank Mr. WESTERMAN as well as Mr. PETERS for presenting the bill to us. It is a necessary fix to an ongoing challenge that we have in our national forests and in the urban-wildland interface areas.

I also thank Congressman FALLON, who is the cosponsor of this amendment.

Now, what we are trying to do here is to include special districts. Right now, special districts are not included in the legislation. Tribes and local governments are, and that is all to the good, however, in California, special districts often provide the necessary control of the areas in the wildland areas as well as in the urban-wildland interface.

Specifically, in my district, we have the East Bay Regional Park District. Most of the wildland in the East Bay of San Francisco Bay is controlled and owned by the park district.

Right now, they would not be able to participate in the programs of this legislation, so we clarified that special districts are eligible to participate in the wildfire-prevention programs authorized under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003, as well in this new legislation, the Fix Our Forests Act. This would provide opportunities for the special districts to help reduce the wildfire risk, support responsible environmental stewardship, and facilitate emergency response and all of the other elements in the legislation.

Secondly, the amendment expands the Good Neighbor Authority to include special districts. The Good Neighbor Authority allows the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management to collaborate with States, counties, and federally recognized Indian Tribes to plan and implement cross-jurisdictional restoration work.

Since special districts are not currently included in the Good Neighbor Authority, they must collaborate with the State government or other eligible entity to participate. Our amendment would finally allow the special districts to enter into Good Neighbor Authority agreements and use their local expertise and partnerships to advance restoration projects in their communities.

As Western States face an increasingly severe year-round fire season, we will need every tool in the toolbox to implement proper forest management practices and reduce the risk that wildfires pose to our communities.

Our amendment would put special districts on par with other forms of government and allow them to be a strong partner in protecting their communities.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to adopt our commonsense, bipartisan amendment that would enable the special districts to participate in existing conservation efforts and further use their specialized expertise to uphold the health and safety of our community.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

□ 1545

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of this bipartisan amendment offered by the gentleman from California, Representative GARAMENDI, and the gentleman from Texas, Representative FALLON.

This is a thoughtful amendment that will enable special districts to participate in the biochar research and development program established in section 301 of the bill. This amendment would also make special districts eligible to participate in the Good Neighbor Authority.

Across the Nation, there are over 39,000 special districts and political subdivisions within States, such as resource conservation districts or water districts.

Both the biochar and Good Neighbor Authority sections of this bill already allow participation from States, Tribes, and local governments.

Providing eligibility for special districts is a commonsense change to ensure more non-Federal partners can participate in these vitally important programs that promote forest health.

I particularly support expanding access for special districts to the biochar projects authorized by section 301 of the bill.

Biochar is an emerging technology that has shown enormous potential as an additive to improve soil health and as a significant carbon sequestration tool, and it also helps the water retention ability of soil.

A key barrier to expanding active forest management is a lack of market access for low-value hazardous fuels that must be removed from overgrown Federal forests.

Biochar is an innovative solution that could create new markets for these low-value materials, thus increasing the pace and scale of forest management. I also support adding special districts to the Good Neighbor Authority.

Since 2014, there have been 490 Good Neighbor projects in 34 States, and every year, over 273 million board feet of timber is being sold.

Adding special districts to this program creates new opportunities for even more forest management projects that could further increase Good Neighbor Authority for forest management activities.

I thank Representatives GARAMENDI and FALLON for their efforts to improve this legislation by thoughtfully including special districts.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GARAMENDI).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. OBERNOLTE

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 5 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 73, line 12, strike "and".
Page 73, after line 14, insert the following: (F) interoperable commercial data; and
Page 74, line 8, insert "thermal mid-wave infrared equipped low earth orbit satellites," after "applications,".

Page 74, line 10, insert "and detection" before the period.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. OBERNOLTE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

MODIFICATION TO AMENDMENT NO. 5 OFFERED BY MR. OBERNOLTE

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent that my amendment be modified with the form I have placed at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will report the modification.

The Clerk read as follows:

MODIFICATION TO AMENDMENT NO. 5 BY MR. OBERNOLTE

Modify the amendment so as to read as follows:

Page 73, line 12, strike "and".
Page 73, after line 14, insert the following: "(F) interoperable commercial data; and"
Strike and replace Section 303, subsection (e) to read as follows:

"(e) PRIORITIZATION OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.—

"In selecting covered entities to participate in the Pilot Program, the Secretaries shall give priority to covered entities—

"(1) that have participated in the Fire Weather Testbed of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; or

"(2) developing and applying emerging technologies for wildfire mitigation, including artificial intelligence, quantum sensing, computing and quantum-hybrid applications, thermal mid-wave infrared equipped low earth orbit satellites, augmented reality, 5G private networks, and device-to-device communications supporting nomadic mesh networks and detection."

Mr. OBERNOLTE (during the reading). Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to dispense with the reading of the modification.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the original request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The amendment is modified.

The gentleman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, thank you very much for the opportunity to present my amendment to the Fix Our Forests Act.

Mr. Chair, I represent a very mountainous region of California, and every year we have wildfires burn in my region.

The problem is particularly acute this year. We have two major wildfires that are still burning in my district, the Bridge fire and the Line fire. Mr. Chair, together, these fires have consumed nearly 100,000 acres.

Thankfully, relatively few structures have been affected this year, but Mr. Chair, I was convinced 2 weeks ago that we were going to lose over 1,000 homes in my district.

This problem is particularly acute because the fires spread so quickly. Unfortunately, the Line fire that caused the evacuation of parts of my hometown in California was started by arson, and that arsonist started three different fires that day.

Two of them, Mr. Chair, firefighters were able to jump on quickly and extinguish. It is the third one that spread quickly enough that it became the conflagration that threatened many communities in my district.

This amendment prioritizes emerging technology, such as early-detection technology and the artificial intelligence techniques required to process it in the pilot program that this bill establishes.

Mr. Chair, there is a lot of promise in early-detection technologies. Conventional satellite detection relies on satellites and geostationary orbits that are far away from the Earth, and therefore, have very poor spatial resolution. Those satellites can only detect a fire when it is already quite large.

Mr. Chair, new low-Earth orbit satellites with thermal detection technology have much better spatial resolution, and they can detect a forest fire when it just begins.

Moreover, these new technologies can be transmitted to the Earth in minutes instead of hours. If you combine that with the artificial intelligence processing technology that looks at these images and can distinguish between a campfire and a tree that is hit by lightning that is the potential source of a forest fire, that is a game-changing development in wildfire technology.

Combine that with fast, aerial, firefighting platforms, and we will be able to put out fires before they get started and avoid some of the catastrophes that have afflicted my district in recent years.

I think this is a commonsense amendment. I am thankful it is bipartisan. I thank my bipartisan sponsor, Congresswoman PETTERSEN from Colorado, who shares my concern about this, and I urge adoption of my amendment.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. VALADAO). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am not opposed to this amendment, but I remain opposed to the underlying bill, which is filled with environmental poison pills and which the administration has warned us is so poorly drafted that they do not and will not know how to implement parts of it. Nothing in this otherwise sound amendment addresses these concerns.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I yield such time as he may consume to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the chair of the Natural Resources Committee and my friend.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the bipartisan amendment offered by Representatives OBERNOLTE of California and PETTERSEN of Colorado, which supports the use of thermal, midwave, infrared-equipped, low-Earth orbit satellites.

It is a mouthful, but it is a good addition to the Fix Our Forests Act, and it shows that we are trying to incorporate the latest technology. We are trying to incorporate AI technology and more remote sensing technology so that we can be on the cutting edge of the fight against wildland fire.

Again, I commend my colleagues for their dedication and willingness to work together to ensure that the best solutions can be brought to bear on addressing the wildfire crisis.

I urge everyone to support the amendment and the underlying bill.

Mr. OBERNOLTE. Mr. Chair, I urge adoption of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. OBERNOLTE).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 6 OFFERED BY MR. HARDER

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 6 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. HARDER. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill add the following:

TITLE IV—ENSURING CASUALTY ASSISTANCE FOR OUR FIREFIGHTERS
SEC. 401. WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT CASUALTY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM.

(a) DEVELOPMENT OF PROGRAM.—Not later than 6 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Inte-

rior shall develop a Wildland Fire Management Casualty Assistance Program (referred to in this section as the "Program") to provide assistance to the next-of-kin of—

(1) firefighters who, while in the line of duty, suffer illness or are critically injured or killed; and

(2) wildland fire support personnel critically injured or killed in the line of duty.

(b) ASPECTS OF PROGRAM.—The Program shall address the following:

(1) The initial and any subsequent notifications to the next-of-kin of a firefighter or wildland fire support personnel who—

(A) is killed in the line of duty; or

(B) requires hospitalization or treatment at a medical facility due to a line-of-duty injury or illness.

(2) The reimbursement of next-of-kin for expenses associated with travel to visit a firefighter or wildland fire support personnel who—

(A) is killed in the line of duty; or

(B) requires hospitalization or treatment at a medical facility due to a line-of-duty injury or illness.

(3) The qualifications, assignment, training, duties, supervision, and accountability for the performance of casualty assistance responsibilities.

(4) The relief or transfer of casualty assistance officers, including notification to survivors of critical injury or illness in the line of duty and next-of-kin of the reassignment of such officers to other duties.

(5) Centralized, short-term and long-term case management procedures for casualty assistance, including rapid access by survivors of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel and casualty assistance officers to expert case managers and counselors.

(6) The provision, through a computer accessible website and other means and at no cost to survivors and next-of-kin of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel, of personalized, integrated information on the benefits and financial assistance available to such survivors from the Federal Government.

(7) The provision of information to survivors and next-of-kin of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel on mechanisms for registering complaints about, or requests for, additional assistance related to casualty assistance.

(8) Liaison with the Department of the Interior, the Department of Justice, and the Social Security Administration to ensure prompt and accurate resolution of issues relating to benefits administered by those agencies for survivors of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel.

(9) Data collection, in consultation with the United States Fire Administration and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, regarding the incidence and quality of casualty assistance provided to survivors of firefighters or wildland fire support personnel.

(c) LINE OF DUTY DEATH BENEFITS.—The Program shall not affect existing authorities for Line of Duty Death benefits for Federal firefighters and wildland fire support personnel.

(d) NEXT-OF-KIN DEFINED.—In this section, the term "next-of-kin" means person or persons in the highest category of priority as determined by the following list (categories appear in descending order of priority):

(1) Surviving legal spouse.

(2) Children (whether by current or prior marriage) age 18 years or older in descending precedence by age.

(3) Father or mother, unless by court order custody has been vested in another (adoptive parent takes precedence over natural parent);

(4) Siblings (whole or half) age 18 years or older in descending precedence by age.

(5) Grandfather or grandmother.

(6) Any other relative (precedence to be determined in accordance with the civil law of descent of the deceased former member's State of domicile at time of death).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. HARDER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. HARDER. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of my amendment to the Fix Our Forests Act.

Our wildland firefighters are heroes. They are at the front lines of combating this wildfire crisis every day.

They work in hazardous conditions, inhaling toxic smoke and enduring temperatures of up to 1,300 degrees Fahrenheit, all the while working up to 18 hours a day.

Our wildland firefighters put their lives on the line to keep our families safe, a job that is so often thankless.

When a tragic accident occurs and a wildland firefighter is harmed, it is our responsibility to provide them with everything they need.

My amendment will ensure that ill, injured, or deceased firefighters and their loved ones have support and resources through establishing a Casualty Assistance Program at the Department of the Interior.

Currently, only a few agencies have this program. For example, the Forest Service. Unfortunately, the Department of the Interior does not.

That means that almost 5,000 Department of the Interior firefighters are left out of a program that will provide them and their families with these critical resources during the hardest moments in their life.

These firefighters are trained the same, they are paid the same, and most importantly, they do the same work, putting their lives on the line every single day as their Forest Service colleagues. Yet, they don't receive the same benefits today. My amendment would immediately fix this and start giving them the resources that they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to vote for my amendment to ensure all wildland firefighters and their families have support and access to the resources they deserve.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS).

Mr. PETERS. Mr. Chairman, we cannot prevent the spread of megafires without prioritizing the needs of wildland firefighters and their families.

Wildland firefighters play a critical role managing our forests and protecting communities from the threats posed by wildfires.

We are so grateful to have their support for the underlying bill. This is dangerous work, and Congress can and must do more to protect these public servants.

One component of this is providing respectful notification and helping

families navigate their options when tragedy occurs.

Congress can take a big step toward that end right now by establishing a Casualty Assistance Program at the Department of the Interior to provide support for all the critically ill, injured, or deceased wildland firefighters and their loved ones.

While this program already exists for some Federal firefighters, almost 5,000 Department of the Interior firefighters and their families lack access to this aid, leaving them unsupported during some of the hardest, most painful times in their lives.

Creating a Casualty Assistance Program through the Department of the Interior will ensure support for all our Federal wildland firefighters and their families.

We have to provide for those who risk life and limb to protect our communities from devastating wildfires. This program is one small way that we show gratitude for our firefighters and their loved ones, by making sure that they have what they need when the unimaginable happens.

I strongly support the inclusion of Mr. HARDER's amendment and the inclusion of this necessary program in the Fix Our Forests Act. This is only one step toward ensuring our firefighters receive every bit of support that they deserve.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I join my colleague, Mr. PETERS, rising in support today of Representative HARDER's amendment, which does authorize the Department of the Interior to create a Casualty Assistance Program to provide support for wildland firefighters and the families of the firefighters who have been critically injured or killed in the line of duty.

As was mentioned, the Forest Service already has a Casualty Assistance Program, which provides travel expenses for next of kin to visit a wildland firefighter hospitalized due to a line-of-duty injury, or worse, killed in action.

It also provides directions for short- and long-term case management procedures for casualty assistance. This commonsense amendment will make the same services available to wildland firefighters at the Department of the Interior, providing critical support to the families of these firefighters.

As wildfire seasons have grown in both length and severity, the job of wildland firefighter has become increasingly dangerous.

Between 2013 and 2022, 96 wildland firefighter fatalities occurred. While Congress works to address the forest

conditions that are putting wildland firefighters into increasingly dire situations, we must also ensure that we are providing adequate support to them and their families.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. HARDER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. HARDER).

The amendment was agreed to.

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AMENDMENT NO. 7 OFFERED BY MR. BARR

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 7 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill insert the following:

TITLE IV—WHITE OAK RESILIENCE

SEC. 401. WHITE OAK RESTORATION INITIATIVE COALITION.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition shall be established—

(1) as a voluntary collaborative group of Federal, State, Tribal, and local governments and private and non-governmental organizations to carry out the duties described in subsection (b); and

(2) in accordance with the charter titled "White Oak Initiative Coalition Charter" adopted by the White Oak Initiative Board of Directors on March 21, 2023 (or a successor charter).

(b) DUTIES.—In addition to the duties specified in the charter described in subsection (a)(2), the duties of the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition are—

(1) to coordinate Federal, State, Tribal, local, private, and non-governmental restoration of white oak in the United States; and

(2) to make program and policy recommendations, consistent with applicable forest management plans, with respect to—

(A) changes necessary to address Federal and State policies that impede activities to improve the health, resiliency, and natural regeneration of white oak;

(B) adopting or modifying Federal and State policies to increase the pace and scale of white oak regeneration and resiliency of white oak;

(C) options to enhance communication, coordination, and collaboration between forest land owners, particularly for cross-boundary projects, to improve the health, resiliency, and natural regeneration of white oak;

(D) research gaps that should be addressed to improve the best available science on white oak;

(E) outreach to forest landowners with white oak or white oak regeneration potential; and

(F) options and policies necessary to improve the quality and quantity of white oak in tree nurseries.

(c) ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT, TECHNICAL SERVICES, AND STAFF SUPPORT.—The Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall make such personnel available to the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition for administrative support, technical services, and development and dissemination of educational materials as the Secretaries determine necessary to carry out this section.

(d) PRIVATE FUNDING OF WHITE OAK RESTORATION PROJECTS.—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, the Secretary of Agriculture may make funds available to the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to carry out this section from the account established pursuant to section 1241(f) of the Food Security Act of 1985 (16 U.S.C. 3841(f)).

SEC. 402. FOREST SERVICE PILOT PROGRAM.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish and carry out 5 pilot projects in national forests to restore white oak in such forests through white oak restoration and natural regeneration practices that are consistent with applicable forest management plans.

(b) NATIONAL FORESTS RESERVED OR WITHDRAWN FROM THE PUBLIC DOMAIN.—At least 3 pilot projects required under subsection (a) shall be carried out on national forests reserved or withdrawn from the public domain.

(c) AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary of Agriculture may enter into cooperative agreements to carry out the pilot projects required under subsection (a).

(d) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 403. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR WHITE OAK REVIEW AND RESTORATION.

(a) ASSESSMENT.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of the Interior shall carry out an assessment of land under the administrative jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior, including fish and wildlife refuges and abandoned mine land, to evaluate—

(A) whether white oak is present on such land; and

(B) the potential to restore white oak forests on such land.

(2) USE OF INFORMATION.—In carrying out the assessment under paragraph (1), the Secretary may use information from sources other than the Department of the Interior, including from the White Oak Initiative and the Forest Service.

(3) REPORT.—Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary shall submit to Congress, and make publicly available on the website of the Department of the Interior, a report regarding the results of the assessment carried out under this subsection.

(b) PILOT PROJECTS.—After the date on which the report required under subsection (a)(3) is submitted, the Secretary shall establish and carry out 5 pilot projects in different areas of land described in subsection (a)(1) to restore and naturally regenerate white oak.

(c) AUTHORITY TO ENTER INTO COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS.—The Secretary of the Interior may enter into cooperative agreements to carry out the pilot projects required under subsection (b).

(d) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 404. WHITE OAK REGENERATION AND UPLAND OAK HABITAT.

(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture (in this section referred to as the “Secretary”) shall establish a non-regulatory program to be known as the “White Oak and Upland Oak Habitat Regeneration Program” (in this section referred to as the “Program”).

(b) DUTIES.—In carrying out the Program, the Secretary shall—

(1) draw upon the best available science and management plans for species of white

oak to identify, prioritize, and implement restoration and conservation activities that will improve the growth of white oak within the United States;

(2) collaborate and coordinate with the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to prioritize white oak restoration initiatives;

(3) adopt a white oak restoration strategy that—

(A) supports the implementation of a shared set of science-based restoration and conservation activities developed in accordance with paragraph (1);

(B) targets cost effective projects with measurable results; and

(C) maximizes restoration outcomes with no net gain of Federal full-time equivalent employees; and

(4) establish the voluntary grant and technical assistance programs in accordance with subsection (e).

(c) COORDINATION.—In establishing the Program the Secretary, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall consult with—

(1) the heads of Federal agencies, including—

(A) the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service; and

(B) the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service; and

(2) the Governor of each State in which restoration efforts will be carried out pursuant to the Program.

(d) PURPOSES.—The purposes of the Program include—

(1) coordinating restoration and conservation activities among Federal, State, local, and Tribal entities and conservation partners to address white oak restoration priorities;

(2) improving and regenerating white oak and upland oak forests and the wildlife habitat such forests provide;

(3) carrying out coordinated restoration and conservation activities that lead to the increased growth of species of white oak in native white oak regions on Federal, State, Tribal, and private land;

(4) facilitating strategic planning to maximize the resilience of white oak systems and habitats under changing climate conditions;

(5) engaging the public through outreach, education, and citizen involvement to increase capacity and support for coordinated restoration and conservation activities for species of white oak; and

(6) increasing scientific capacity to support the planning, monitoring, and research activities necessary to carry out such coordinated restoration and conservation activities.

(e) GRANTS AND ASSISTANCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—To the extent that funds are available to carry out this section, the Secretary shall establish a voluntary grant and technical assistance program (in this section referred to as the “grant program”) to achieve the purposes of the Program described in subsection (d).

(2) ADMINISTRATION.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall enter into a cooperative agreement with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (in this subsection referred to as the “Foundation”) to manage and administer the grant program.

(B) FUNDING.—Subject to the availability of appropriations made in advance for such purpose, after the Secretary enters into a cooperative agreement with the Foundation under subparagraph (A), the Foundation shall for each fiscal year, receive amounts to carry out this subsection in an advance payment of the entire amount on October 1, or as soon as practicable thereafter, of that fiscal year.

(3) APPLICATION OF NATIONAL FISH AND WILDLIFE FOUNDATION ESTABLISHMENT ACT.—Amounts received by the Foundation to carry out the grant program shall be subject to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Establishment Act (16 U.S.C. 3701 et seq.), excluding section 10(a) of that Act (16 U.S.C. 3709(a)).

(f) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 405. TREE NURSERY SHORTAGES.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this section, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—

(1) develop and implement a national strategy to increase the capacity of Federal, State, Tribal, and private tree nurseries to address the nationwide shortage of tree seedlings; and

(2) coordinate such strategy with—

(A) the national reforestation strategy of the Forest Service; and

(B) each regional implementation plan for National Forests.

(b) ELEMENTS.—The strategy required under subsection (a) shall—

(1) be based on the best available science and data; and

(2) identify and address—

(A) regional seedling shortages of bareroot and container tree seedlings;

(B) regional reforestation opportunities and the seedling supply necessary to fulfill such opportunities;

(C) opportunities to enhance seedling diversity and close gaps in seed inventories; and

(D) barriers to expanding, enhancing, or creating new infrastructure to increase nursery capacity.

SEC. 406. WHITE OAK RESEARCH.

(a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Agriculture may enter into a memorandum of understanding with a Tribe or institution, including a covered land grant college, to collaboratively conduct research on—

(1) white oak genes with resistance or tolerance to stress;

(2) white oak trees that exhibit vigor for the purpose of increasing survival and growth;

(3) establishing a genetically diverse white oak seeds bank capable of responding to stressors;

(4) providing a sustainable supply of white oak seedlings and genetic resources;

(5) improved methods for aligning seed sources with the future climate at planting sites;

(6) reforestation of white oak through natural and artificial regeneration;

(7) improved methods for retaining and increasing white oak trees in forests;

(8) improved methods for reforesting abandoned mine land sites; and

(9) economic and social aspects of white oak forest management across land ownerships.

(b) CONSULT.—In carrying out the research under subsection (a), the Tribe or institution, including a covered land grant college, that enters into the memorandum of understanding under such subsection may consult with such States, nonprofit organizations, institutions of higher education, and other scientific bodies, as the entity subject to such memorandum determines appropriate.

(c) SUNSET.—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

(d) COVERED LAND GRANT COLLEGE DEFINED.—In this section, the term “covered

land grant college” means an 1862 Institution, an 1890 Institution, or a 1994 Institution (as such terms are defined, respectively, in section 2 of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7601)).

SEC. 407. USDA FORMAL INITIATIVE.

(a) **IN GENERAL.**—The Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service and in coordination with the Chief of the Forest Service, shall establish a formal initiative on white oak to—

(1) re-establish white oak forests where appropriate;

(2) improve management of existing white oak forests to foster natural regeneration of white oak;

(3) provide technical assistance to private landowners to re-establish, improve management of, and naturally regenerate white oak;

(4) improve and expand white oak nursery stock; and

(5) adapt and improve white oak seedlings.

(b) **SUNSET.**—The authority under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of the enactment of this Act.

SEC. 408. AUTHORITIES.

To the maximum extent practicable, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture shall use the authorities provided under this title in combination with other authorities to carry out projects, including—

(1) good neighbor agreements entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113); and

(2) stewardship contracting projects entered into under section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Kentucky.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of my bipartisan amendment to the Fix Our Forests Act, a terrific piece of bipartisan legislation, and I compliment both Chairman WESTERMAN and the gentleman from California (Mr. PETERS) for their leadership on this.

My amendment would, if enacted, secure the future of the American white oak, which is one of the most important tree species in the Eastern United States. It occupies 104 million acres in this country and is vital for biodiversity, wildlife, and our economy.

American white oak is used in almost every forest product, including furniture, flooring, cabinetry, barrels for aging wine, American whiskey and, yes, Kentucky bourbon, which is America’s native spirit by the definition passed by Congress, and which must be aged in new charred white oak barrels.

Kentucky’s Sixth District is home to some of the world’s most renowned distilleries. The industry as a whole produces over \$9 billion and more than 23,000 jobs for the Commonwealth annually. Additionally, Kentucky distillers exported over \$500 million worth of products abroad in 2022.

The problem is that while there is ample mature white oak now, there

will not be in the future unless immediate and widespread action is taken. Young stands of white oak simply don’t exist in the amount needed to support wildlife and sustainable forestry and do not exist for the future of the bourbon industry.

Reforestation of white oak is challenging because without some additional assistance here, white oak is extremely slow growing. Over the next 20 years, the population of white oak is expected to drop considerably, which will have a significant negative impact on Kentucky’s ability to age and produce bourbon.

My amendment addresses this specifically by establishing the White Oak Restoration Initiative Coalition to encourage the Forest Service to work alongside private and State partners at no cost to the taxpayer.

Additionally, the amendment asks the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to regenerate white oak through a series of pilot projects in national parks and on volunteered private lands.

Lastly, it allows the Forest Service to enter into memorandums of understanding with land grant institutions to conduct much-needed research on white oak.

This bipartisan amendment does not authorize any new spending or programs but instead would work within existing programs and agency budgets to preserve our heritage and fortify an industry that is critical to Kentucky’s economy and is America’s native spirit.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I think you know what I am about to say. I am not opposed to this amendment, but I continue to strongly oppose the underlying bill. It is full of poison pills that harm the environment and will spread our Forest Service even thinner right when we need them more than ever. Unfortunately, nothing in this amendment addresses those concerns.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I would just say to my friend from California that former Speaker Henry Clay, who was famous for bringing barrels of white oak filled with Kentucky whiskey up to the Capitol Building, used to famously say that Kentucky bourbon could lubricate the wheels of government. I would hope that the gentlewoman would take that into consideration in withdrawing her opposition to this very important amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield time to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the sponsor of the legislation and the chairman of the Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman for yielding, and I rise in strong support of his amendment.

This amendment will add to the underlying legislation key pieces of Representative BARR’s bipartisan White Oak Resilience Act, which passed out of the Natural Resources Committee unanimously this year.

While the Fix Our Forests Act primarily addresses the dire state of our overgrown and fire-prone forests in the West, this amendment addresses an urgent challenge confronting our Eastern forests.

At current trends, we face an imminent shortage of white oak trees throughout their native range of the Eastern United States. Because of a lack of necessary forest management practices and shifts in the forest environment, we have created a situation where white oak seedlings and saplings are not growing at a sustainable rate. Presently, roughly 75 percent of white oaks in the U.S. are classified as mature. The lack of younger trees is very troubling. Without intervention, the white oak population will drastically decline in the next 10 to 15 years. White oaks are a keystone species that provide immense ecosystem benefits to the many forests within the species’ 104-million-acre range. This iconic American tree is especially important for wildlife that is both a preferred food source and habitat for many species.

As Representative BARR mentioned, there are many uses for white oak, many uses that are especially important to the great State of Kentucky. This is a good amendment that will help restore the long-term viability of this beautiful and important tree. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Mr. BARR. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this legislation. It is a win-win. It is a win for reforestation, it is a win for the Kentucky bourbon industry, and it certainly will help this important bipartisan legislation, Fix Our Forests Act, pass.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Kentucky (Mr. BARR).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS. PETERSEN
The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of subtitle B of title I add the following:

SEC. 117. PROGRAM TO SUPPORT PRIORITY REFORESTATION AND RESTORATION PROJECTS OF DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.

(a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of the Interior, in coordination with the heads of covered Federal agencies, shall establish a program to provide support for priority projects identified under subsection (c)(2), in accordance with this section.

(b) SUPPORT.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a), the Secretary may provide support through—

(1) cooperative agreements entered into in accordance with processes established by the Secretary; and

(2) contracts, including contracts established pursuant to the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5301 et seq.).

(c) ANNUAL IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY PROJECTS.—Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this Act and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the heads of covered Federal agencies, shall—

(1) identify lands of the United States administered by, or under the jurisdiction of, the Secretary of the Interior that require reforestation and restoration due to unplanned disturbances and that are unlikely to experience natural regeneration without assistance; and

(2) establish a list of priority projects for reforestation and restoration for the upcoming year, which may include activities to ensure adequate and appropriate seed and seedling availability to further the objectives of other priority projects.

(d) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out the program under subsection (a) and the requirements under subsection (c), the Secretary shall consult or collaborate with, as appropriate, and inform the following:

(1) State and local governments.

(2) Indian Tribes.

(3) Covered institutions of higher education.

(4) Federal agencies that administer lands of the United States that adjoin or are proximal to lands that are the subject of priority projects and potential priority projects.

(5) Other stakeholders, as determined by the Secretary.

(e) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior shall submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a report that includes the following:

(1) An accounting of all lands identified under subsection (c)(1) for the period covered by the report.

(2) A list of priority projects identified under subsection (c)(2) for the period covered by the report and, with respect to each such priority project, any support issued under the program under subsection (a) and any progress made towards reforestation and restoration.

(3) An accounting of each contract and cooperative agreement established under the program under subsection (a).

(4) A description of the actions taken in accordance with subsection (d).

(5) Assessments with respect to—

(A) gaps in—

(i) the implementation of the program under subsection (a); and

(ii) the progress made under the program with respect to priority projects; and

(B) opportunities to procure funding necessary to address any such gaps.

(f) NONDUPLICATION.—In carrying out this section, the Secretary of the Interior shall collaborate with the Secretary of Agri-

culture and the Secretary of Defense to ensure the nonduplication of activities carried out under section 205.

(g) SUNSET.—The authority provided under this section shall terminate on the date that is 7 years after the date of enactment of this Act.

(h) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

(1) COVERED FEDERAL AGENCY.—The term “covered Federal agency” means the National Park Service, the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, or the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

(2) COVERED INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The term “covered institution of higher education” has the meaning given the term “eligible institutions” in section 301(e)(3).

(3) NATURAL REGENERATION; REFORESTATION.—The terms “natural regeneration” and “reforestation” have the meanings given such terms in section 3(e)(4)(A) of the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16 U.S.C. 1601(3)(4)(A)).

(4) RESTORATION.—The term “restoration” means activities that facilitate the recovery of an ecosystem that has been degraded, damaged, or destroyed, including the reestablishment of appropriate plant species composition and community structure.

(5) UNPLANNED ECOSYSTEM DISTURBANCE.—The term “unplanned ecosystem disturbance” means any unplanned disturbance that disrupts the structure or composition of an ecosystem, including a wildfire, an infestation of insects or disease, and a weather event.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. PETERSEN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. PETERSEN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Over 3 million people in my home State of Colorado live in areas at moderate to high risk of wildfires, which is over 50 percent of our State’s population. Since 2001, 20 of the largest wildfires in our recorded history have occurred in Colorado, resulting in the loss of more than 2,500 homes over the past two decades.

Wildfires have not only threatened lives but also damaged ecosystems and disrupted communities.

Coloradans feel the devastating impacts of climate change every single day. This is our new normal: Fires are burning more frequently and more fiercely than ever before.

It is essential that we recognize the urgency of addressing this crisis to protect our communities. While recognizing that this bill doesn’t include everything that we want to see, it is an important step moving forward.

We need a holistic approach, and this includes investing in predisaster mitigation measures, such as strengthening our infrastructure in housing and enhancing early detection capabilities, supporting our wildland firefighting workforce, and focusing on post-disaster resilience.

My amendment is a piece of this comprehensive response. Specifically, my amendment will require the Department of the Interior, in coordina-

tion with States, local governments, Tribes, and colleges to identify critical lands in need of reforestation and restoration due to natural disasters, and to support projects in those areas.

By investing in restoration and reforestation projects, we can ensure that our communities not only recover but also rebuild in a way that enhances their resilience against future disasters.

Unfortunately, wildfires leave lasting scars on our landscapes and can permanently alter our environment, heightening the risk of deadly flash flooding and mud flows. I hear from my constituents about their concerns regarding wildfires but also, unfortunately, flooding is close behind.

That is why it is important that we pass this amendment to strengthen the provisions in the underlying bill and ensure our communities are equipped to face the challenges head-on.

Recovery after a wildfire is a lengthy and challenging process. However, my amendment, together with the provisions in the bill, represents a step toward building stronger, more resilient communities against the threat of wildfires.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the adoption of this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this amendment, which seeks to expand nursery and seed capacity, support reforestation efforts by State, Tribal, and local governments, as well as institutions of higher education on lands managed by the Department of the Interior.

I thank the amendment’s sponsor for her engagement on this important issue. I greatly appreciate her and her staff’s willingness to work with us on some revisions to the amendment. This amendment will help improve badly needed reforestation and restoration activities across the Nation by engaging non-Federal partners, including Tribes, who are critical partners as we seek to improve the health of our Nation’s forests.

The magnitude of our wildfire and forest health crisis demands an all-hands-on-deck approach. I am encouraged that this amendment will empower non-Federal partners to assist in vital work.

The Department of the Interior has identified a reforestation backlog of roughly 2.4 million acres across their land management agencies. This total is likely to grow considering the massive numbers of acres lost to wildfires

in recent years. This is a good amendment and will help tackle the enormous reforestation and restoration backlog affecting Department of the Interior lands. I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PETTERSEN. Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Colorado (Ms. PETTERSEN).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 9 OFFERED BY MR. MULLIN

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 9 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 13, line 1, strike “predict” and insert “predict, using data tools (including artificial intelligence) and other decision support products.”

Page 13, line 5, strike “community” and insert “community (including at-risk communities identified in firehed assessments conducted under section 105)”.

Page 14, line 2, strike “and” at the end.

Page 14, line 4, strike the period at the end and insert “; and”.

Page 14, after line 4, insert the following new paragraph:

(8) disseminate data tools (including artificial intelligence) and other decision support products, for use in manners consistent with the purposes described paragraphs (1) through (7), to the following:

- (A) Federal agencies.
- (B) Indian Tribes.
- (C) State and local governments.
- (D) Academic or research institutions.
- (E) Other entities, public or private, identified by the Director.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. MULLIN) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

My California congressional district sits on the San Francisco peninsula and is home to a vibrant innovation economy that supports every sector of American industry.

The leading-edge technologies being developed and improved in the bay area have the potential to help keep the rest of California and our Western States safe from the risk of wildfire.

My amendment today seeks to ensure that we are using the best technologies available to understand wildfire risk. Artificial intelligence, with its potential to analyze large datasets and improve predictive models, can and should play an important role in informing land management decisions.

These data tools will be vital for enabling the proposed Firehed Center in the Fix Our Forests Act. This should be

an easy vote for those who support using the best available technologies to protect communities and inform land management activities.

Mr. Chair, I urge the adoption of my amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this amendment, which would clarify that the Firehed Center created by this legislation can use artificial intelligence and other decision support tools to assess fire risk to communities and landscapes.

The Fix Our Forests Act establishes a new Firehed Center for relevant land management and science-focused agencies to comprehensively assess and predict fire across the landscape and in the wildland-urban interface. This will reduce fragmentation and create a one-stop shop for predictive services that can help inform suppression and management decisions across jurisdictional landscapes.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. MULLIN. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. MULLIN).

The amendment was agreed to.

□ 1615

AMENDMENT NO. 10 OFFERED BY MR. VALADAO

The Acting CHAIR (Ms. BOEBERT). It is now in order to consider amendment No. 10 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Chair, I rise as the designee for the gentleman from California (Mr. COSTA).

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of the bill add the following:

TITLE IV—EXPANSION OF PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS UNDER WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM
SEC. 401. WATER SOURCE PROTECTION PROGRAM.

Section 303 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6542(g)(4)(B)) is amended—

(1) in subsection (a)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) through (7) as paragraphs (2) through (8), respectively;

(B) by inserting before paragraph (2), as so redesignated, the following:

“(1) ADJACENT LAND.—The term ‘adjacent land’ means non-Federal land, including State, local, and private land, that is adjacent to, and within the same watershed as, National Forest System land on which a watershed protection and restoration project is carried out under this section.”; and

(C) in paragraph (2), as so redesignated—

(i) by redesignating subparagraphs (G) and (H) as subparagraphs (K) and (L), respectively; and

(ii) by inserting after subparagraph (F) the following:

“(G) an acequia association;

“(H) a local, regional, or other public entity that manages stormwater or wastewater resources or other related water infrastructure;

“(I) a land-grant mercedes;

“(J) a local, regional, or other private entity that has water delivery authority.”;

(2) in subsection (b)—

(A) by striking “The Secretary shall” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) REQUIREMENTS.—A watershed protection and restoration project under the Program shall be designed to—

“(A) protect and restore watershed health, water supply and quality, a municipal or agricultural water supply system, and water-related infrastructure;

“(B) protect and restore forest health from insect infestation and disease or wildfire; or

“(C) advance any combination of the purposes described in subparagraphs (A) and (B).

“(3) PRIORITIES.—In selecting watershed protection and restoration projects under the Program, the Secretary shall give priority to projects that would—

“(A) provide risk management benefits associated with: drought; wildfire; post-wildfire conditions; extreme weather; flooding; resilience to climate change; and watershed and fire resilience, including minimizing risks to watershed health, water supply and quality, and water-related infrastructure, including municipal and agricultural water supply systems;

“(B) support aquatic restoration and conservation efforts that complement existing or planned forest restoration or wildfire risk reduction efforts; or

“(C) provide quantifiable benefits to water supply or quality and include the use of nature-based solutions, such as restoring wetland and riparian ecosystems.

“(4) CONDITIONS FOR PROJECTS ON ADJACENT LAND.—

“(A) IN GENERAL.—No project or activity may be carried out under this section on adjacent land unless the owner of the adjacent land agrees in writing that the owner is a willing and engaged partner in carrying out that project or activity.

“(B) EFFECT.—Nothing in this section shall be construed to authorize any change in—

“(i) the ownership of adjacent land on which a project or activity is carried out under this section; or

“(ii) the management of adjacent land on which a project or activity is carried out under this section, except during the carrying out of that project or activity.”;

(3) in subsection (c)—

(A) in paragraph (1), by striking “with end water users” and inserting “with end water users to protect and restore the condition of National Forest watersheds and adjacent land that provide water—

“(A) to the end water users subject to the agreement; or

“(B) for the benefit of another end water user.”;

(B) in paragraph (2)—

(i) in subparagraph (C), by striking “or” at the end;

(ii) by redesignating subparagraph (D) as subparagraph (E); and

(iii) by inserting after subparagraph (C) the following:

“(D) a good neighbor agreement entered into under section 8206 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C. 2113a); or”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(3) COOPERATION WITH NON-FEDERAL PARTNERS.—The Secretary shall cooperate with non-Federal partners in carrying out assessments, planning, project design, and project implementation under this section.”;

(4) in subsection (d)—

(A) by amending paragraph (2) to read as follows:

“(2) REQUIREMENT.—A water source management plan shall be—

“(A) designed to protect and restore ecological integrity (as defined in section 219.19 of title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (as in effect on the date of enactment of this subparagraph));

“(B) based on the best available scientific information; and

“(C) 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.”; and

(B) by adding at the end the following:

“(4) REDUCING REDUNDANCY.—An existing watershed plan, such as a watershed protection and restoration action plan developed under section 304(a)(3), or other applicable watershed planning documents as approved by the Secretary may be used as the basis for a water source management plan under this subsection.”; and

(5) in subsection (e)(1), by striking “primary purpose of” and all that follows through the period at the end and inserting “primary purpose of advancing any of the purposes described in subsection (b)(2).”.

SEC. 402. WATERSHED CONDITION FRAMEWORK TECHNICAL CORRECTIONS.

Section 304(a) of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6543(a)) is amended in paragraphs (3) and (5) by striking “protection and”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California.

Mr. VALADAO. Madam Chair, my amendment would add the text of my bill, the bipartisan Headwaters Protection Act, to the Fix Our Forests Act.

This commonsense language is led by my colleague from California (Mr. COSTA) and myself, and it has bipartisan support. It was included in the House Committee on Agriculture’s farm bill.

This amendment expands public and private partnerships in forestry and watershed management projects under the Water Source Protection Program. These projects can improve access to clean drinking water, provide for greater downstream water availability, and prevent future wildfires.

My amendment makes changes to improve the program, including expanding the number of entities that are eligible to participate in the program to include local, regional, and public entities that have water management and delivery expertise; allowing non-Federal partners to input their knowledge and expertise in the design and implementation of forestry and watershed management projects; and allowing for the use of existing watershed

condition frameworks to reduce bureaucracy and deploy projects faster.

Overall, this amendment would support efforts in the San Joaquin Valley like the Olam project, a series of wildlife prevention and restoration projects in the Pine Flat watershed between public and private partners. This amendment would build off of the good work done in the Fix Our Forests Act, and I urge its adoption.

Madam Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Madam Chair, I rise today in support of this bipartisan amendment being offered by Representatives COSTA and VALADAO of California.

The Committee on Natural Resources held a field hearing this Congress in Representative VALADAO’s district on the importance of water, and this amendment is a bipartisan, good faith effort to help address concerns raised at that hearing.

This bipartisan amendment would expand public and private forestry and watershed management partnerships and reduce redundancies under the existing Water Source Protection Program.

Representatives COSTA and VALADAO’s amendment includes good governance changes to the Water Source Protection Program. It expands the number of eligible lands and entities under the program and reduces duplicative application materials and red tape for existing watershed restoration action plans.

Finally, this amendment establishes clear program priorities that help align the program to its core mission.

These changes align with the spirit of the Fix Our Forests Act. Oftentimes, we hear calls for more funding to solve a problem. However, oftentimes, by focusing on a program’s priorities and reducing red tape, the cost goes down and funding can be shifted away from bureaucracy and toward getting work done on the ground.

Again, I commend Representatives VALADAO and COSTA for reaching across the aisle to work together on this amendment. I have had the pleasure of working with both of these gentlemen on the Save Our Sequoias Act.

Mr. Chair, I encourage support of the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. VALADAO. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MOONEY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. VALADAO).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 11 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. VALADAO). It is now in order to consider amendment

No. 11 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise as the designee for the gentleman from Montana (Mr. ZINKE).

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 31, line 5, strike “and”.

Page 31, after line 5, insert the following:

“(II) to carry out reconstruction, repair, and restoration of non-National Forest System roads necessary to implement projects on Federal lands;

“(III) to construct new permanent roads on Federal lands that are—

“(aa) necessary to implement authorized restoration activities; and

“(bb) approved by the Federal agency through an environmental analysis or categorical exclusion decision;

“(IV) to complete new permanent road construction to replace and decommission an existing permanent road that is adversely impacting forest, rangeland, or watershed health; and”.

Page 31, line 6, strike “(II)” and insert “(V)”.

Page 31, line 7, strike “subclause (I)” and insert “subclauses (I) through (IV)”.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer the amendment on behalf of my friend from Montana, Representative ZINKE, which will improve the effectiveness of the Good Neighbor Authority.

The Good Neighbor Authority program enables cross-boundary forest management activities with States, Tribes, and counties. Collaborative tools like this program are critical to confronting the wildfire crisis as raging wildfires don’t respect man-made borders that separate forests into different jurisdictions.

Since 2014, over 490 Good Neighbor Authority projects have been started in 34 States, and more than 273 million board feet of timber is sold yearly through this program.

Currently, funds from the sale of timber from Good Neighbor Authority projects can be used to treat insect- and disease-infested trees, reduce hazardous fuels, improve forest health, and restore and repair decommissioned Forest Service roads necessary to implement restoration activities.

This amendment would expand the permissible uses of timber receipts derived from Good Neighbor Authority projects to include the reconstruction, repair, and restoration of roads on non-Forest Service lands when such activities are needed to implement forest management projects on Federal land.

New road construction on Federal lands would also be a permitted use under this amendment to facilitate authorized restoration projects. However, these new road projects would still be required to comply with the applicable environmental review processes.

Further, this amendment would allow timber receipts to be used to construct new roads to replace existing roads that adversely impact forest, rangeland, or watershed health.

Access to areas urgently needing treatment remains a huge challenge to improving forest health. Roads are beneficial for forest management, provide the public with access to outdoor recreation opportunities, and enable safer and more effective wildland fire-fighting.

This thoughtful amendment from Representative ZINKE will improve forest management activities under Good Neighbor Authority by empowering partners to overcome some of the access challenges preventing badly needed work in our forests.

Mr. Chair, I thank Representative ZINKE for his leadership on this issue.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this amendment, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, this amendment would permit the use of Good Neighbor Authority revenues for the construction of new roads.

Currently, the Forest Service manages 372,000 miles of roads across 193 million acres that they manage. Due to such a large inventory, the Forest Service often faces financial difficulties in operation and maintenance.

Over half, over 58 percent, of the Forest Service's \$7.66 billion of deferred maintenance is related to roads. The Forest Service has a colossal network of roads that is already far too big for them to maintain.

For this reason, it is hard to support an amendment that would allow the construction of even more roads but doesn't provide any resources for the future maintenance of those new Forest Service roads.

Our Forest Service is spread dangerously thin due to Republican budget cuts. This amendment would make the problem even worse.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, this is a good amendment that allows for good use of our resources.

It allows Tribes and local communities to take care of the roads that are necessary to access, to be able to do these forest management projects, and also to be able to fight fires when they break out and stop them before they get too big.

Mr. Chair, I support the amendment.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gen-

tlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 12 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 12 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 29, after line 3, insert the following:

(B) in section 603(c)(2)(B) (16 U.S.C. 6591b(c)(2)(B)), by striking "Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III" and inserting "Fire Regime I, Fire Regime II, Fire Regime III, Fire Regime IV, or Fire Regime V".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer my amendment that clarifies existing authorities may be utilized to prevent wildfires in Fire Regimes IV and V, thereby expanding the acres of at-risk forests that would be eligible for streamlined management authorities.

This important amendment is critical to fire mitigation efforts across the States of Colorado, Wyoming, New Mexico, Arizona, California, Utah, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, Montana, Michigan, Minnesota, Wisconsin, New York, Maine, West Virginia, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Missouri, Louisiana, Mississippi, Indiana, Ohio, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Virginia, North Carolina, Iowa, Florida, and Texas.

The Forest Service estimates 63 million acres are currently at risk of catastrophic wildfire, and each year, nearly 10 million acres in the U.S. catch on fire. Colorado also had the three largest recorded wildfires in State history in 2020.

Federal agencies have chosen to spend billions on the back end, putting out wildfires as opposed to prioritizing active management upfront that would reduce the size and number of wildfires.

According to the Colorado State Forest Service, more than 24.4 million acres of Colorado forestland impact Colorado's water supply, where 80 percent of the State's population relies on those forested watersheds for municipal water supplies.

Healthy forests act as a natural water filter and storage system and are critical to maintaining healthy watersheds. In the United States, forests are a source of drinking water for over 180 million people.

We can reduce the size and severity of wildfires through active forest management, which will also help protect our watersheds and municipal water supplies.

Let's actively manage our forests, be good stewards of the land that we have

been blessed with, and pass this important amendment.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, this amendment would further expand a categorical exclusion under the National Environmental Policy Act for projects completed in two additional fire management regimes.

For context, one of the new regimes, Fire Regime V, applies to vegetation types that rarely burn, typically due to a lack of moisture or fuel. The fire return interval in those landscapes is more than 200 years.

Because of the categorization of these fire regimes, hazardous fuels management is not as high of a priority and does not need a legislative categorical exclusion expansion.

This follows the trend that my Republican colleagues have been setting. They have been legislatively expanding categorical exclusions, and the Committee on Natural Resources Democrats remain opposed.

During our debate today, we have shown how meddling in the National Environmental Policy Act process is dangerous and how it sets a precedent that will do more harm than good. Categorical exclusions are most effective when they are developed with expert input by agencies and the Council on Environmental Quality instead of mandated by Congress.

This amendment simply continues to build on the slew of National Environmental Policy Act waivers that the Fix Our Forests Act advances, and it is no surprise that my Republican counterparts have chosen to make this amendment in order.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

□ 1630

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I seem to recall just yesterday that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle had no problem meddling in NEPA to get their leftwing projects through CHIPS authorized.

Mr. Chair, I would like to just highlight the drought that has caused these catastrophic wildfires.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise in support of the gentlewoman's amendment, and I appreciate the hard work that Representative BOEBERT has put into this thoughtful amendment, which does include Fire Regimes IV and V, and as we have these very dry, fire-prone areas out West, it is important to include these two fire regimes.

Again, I support the amendment.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, the proposal of utilizing existing authorities to prevent wildfires in Fire Regimes IV and V is crucial as it focuses on

proactive management and streamlining of forest health.

As someone who prioritizes humans flourishing, I see the value in taking measures that can prevent environmental disasters that have devastating impacts on human beings and their property.

It is important to remember that we have the power to shape our environment and neutralize dangers through human innovation powered by cost-effective energy. In the case of wildfire prevention, this could mean better forest management practices, controlled burns to reduce fuel load, and advanced fire detection and suppression technologies.

Again, Mr. Chair, I would urge the adoption of my amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I continue to oppose the amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. ELLZEY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 13 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 13 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 71, line 1, strike "treatments" and insert "treatments, grazing,".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer my amendment that will ensure grazing as one of the hazardous fuels reduction activities authorized by the bill.

Our Federal lands are overgrown and poorly managed, making them more susceptible to wildfire and disease. Catastrophic wildfires have taken a tremendous toll on Coloradans. These incidents have threatened the lives of millions of people and accounted for millions of dollars of damages each year.

Farmers and ranchers have lost crops, livestock, and structures, have been evacuated, and had their operations disrupted by smoke, public safety power shutoffs, or loss of insurance.

There are Federal lands in Colorado and the West where we once had 50 to 100 trees per acre, but now we see 500 to 1,000 trees per acre. There are also 6 billion standing dead trees in the Western United States. Some people call that a problem. I call it a tinderbox waiting to burn.

Fuel treatments are effective, and Federal agencies have made clear that over 90 percent of the fuel treatments

are effective in changing fire behavior and/or helping with the control of wildfire.

Grazing animals play an important part in maintaining healthy ecosystems by controlling the ecological balance of vegetative species, reducing fire fuels that result from the accumulation of nonnative plant biomass, and improving the soil health by trampling plant residue and their own waste into the soil profile.

Cattle, sheep, and goats can play a regenerative wildfire mitigation role that also provides for our food and fiber needs.

Let's support our Nation's ranchers and encourage innovative and cost-effective hazardous fuel reductions like grazing.

I urge passage of my amendment that ensures the grazing activities are recognized as hazardous fuels reduction work when the agency calculates the number of acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels, improving transparency and accountability.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Arkansas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I rise today in support of this amendment being offered by Representative BOEBERT.

This amendment ensures that live-stock grazing activities are considered as hazardous fuels reduction work when Federal land management agencies calculate the number of acres treated to reduce hazardous fuels.

Section 302 of the Fix Our Forests Act requires land management agencies to submit a yearly hazardous fuels reduction report to Congress based on the actual number of acres the respective agencies treated over the past year. The goal is to improve transparency and accountability.

Livestock grazing is beneficial for land. Just last month, the U.S. Department of Agriculture released research showing livestock grazing can lower wildfire risk and limit invasive grasses. The rangeland scientists who published this report include researchers from Representative BOEBERT's home State of Colorado.

I, again, thank her for her leadership and for supporting our ranching and farming families.

Mr. Chair, I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee for supporting this important amendment that supports

our farmers and ranchers back home and reduces the hazardous fuels by allowing grazing to take place on our public lands.

Again, I urge adoption of this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 14 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 14 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 38, after line 12, insert the following: "(H) proposals that seek to remove or treat insects or diseases, including the removal of trees killed by, or infested with, bark beetles in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming;"

Page 38, line 13, strike "(H)" and insert "(I)".

Page 38, line 23, strike "(I)" and insert "(J)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise to offer my amendment that will require regional foresters to submit a plan through the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program for the treatment and removal of trees killed by or infested with bark beetles in Western States.

The bark beetle epidemic has caused significant damage to roughly 100,000 square miles of forest in the Western United States alone. There are 600 different species of bark beetles in the United States. Several species, such as the mountain pine beetle, attack and kill live trees. Most species of bark beetles live in dead, weakened, or dying hosts.

Along the West Coast and through the Rocky Mountains, bark beetles have affected tens of millions of acres of forests. While bark beetles are native to U.S. forests and play important ecological roles, they can cause extensive tree mortality and negative economic and social impacts.

Spruce beetles have killed millions of trees on more than 1.8 million acres in Colorado since 2000 and provided increased fuels for wildfires. In Colorado, 2021 was one of the worst wildfire seasons our State has ever endured with the three largest fires in State history.

Bark beetle epidemics and catastrophic wildfires are a significant threat. This can be minimized by thinning overgrown forests and removing hazardous fuels produced by beetle

overpopulation. This process is sure to create jobs and increase overall forest health.

I urge passage of my amendment that would prioritize Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program activities that address the bark beetle epidemic, a major contributor to wildfires in Colorado and the West.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, this amendment was summarized by Republicans as requiring the regional foresters to develop plans for the treatment and removal of dead or dying trees due to insect disease.

However, I want to clarify that this amendment actually doesn't require anything of regional foresters at all. Instead, it requires special consideration for project proposals under the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program that seek to remove or treat insects or diseases.

The purpose of the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program is to encourage the collaborative science-based ecosystem restoration of priority forest landscapes.

Insect treatments are already eligible under the program and are executed often as restoration treatments. However, they are also often, and should be, used in tandem with other collaborative strategies as part of a broader landscape treatment plan.

I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, let the beetle battle begin. The bark kill epidemic in Colorado and the western United States is a problem that we must address. I drive by these dying forests on a regular basis, and seeing the tinderbox that it has created is a huge devastation.

The carbon emissions that are released from a catastrophic wildfire are very harmful and impactful to my State of Colorado and the West, so I say it is time to do something about the beetle kill, beetle kill, beetle kill.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN), the chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding. I thank her for bringing this amendment, which is important. I support the amendment.

Unfortunately, our forests out West are overstocked. They compete with each other. They get weak. They invite disease and insect infestation. These insects and diseases kill the trees, and then you have dry kindling for a lightning strike or a wildfire that gets out, and it creates the perfect storm for catastrophic wildfires.

Again, I thank Representative BOEBERT for her efforts to improve the

health of our western forests, and I support the amendment.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 15 OFFERED BY MS. BOEBERT

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 15 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Page 38, after line 12, insert the following: "(H) proposals that seek to facilitate the sale of firewood and Christmas trees on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary or the Secretary of the Interior;"

Page 38, line 13, strike "(H)" and insert "(I)".

Page 38, line 23, strike "(I)" and insert "(J)".

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Colorado.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I rise today to offer my amendment that requires regional foresters to submit a plan on the sale of Christmas trees and firewood on Federal land.

Under current law, American families can purchase a permit from the Forest Service to cut Christmas trees from their favorite national forest, as well as harvest any firewood, transplants, posts, and poles, and other forest products to improve forest health.

We have seen successful Christmas tree and firewood harvesting operations in my home State of Colorado, and this program has served as a locally based solution to help thin our overgrown forests.

□ 1645

According to the Forest Service: "The permit system helps to thin densely populated stands of small-diameter trees. Local forest health experts identify areas that benefit from thinning trees and tend to be the perfect size for Christmas trees. Removing these trees in designated areas helps other trees grow larger and can open areas that provide food for wildlife."

My constituents are struggling right now as they deal with the disastrous effects of the Democrats' destructive economic policies. They unleashed record inflation on Americans that has raised utility bills, driven up energy costs, and made it harder to live for most Americans.

My amendment provides an affordable fuel alternative for families across the Nation to heat their homes as well

as create lasting holiday memories for families to interact with their local forests.

I urge my colleagues to support my commonsense amendment to prioritize collaborative foster landscape restoration program activities to allow for the removal of firewood and Christmas trees.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to this amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, similar to Ms. BOEBERT's last amendment, this amendment was summarized by Republicans as requiring that regional foresters develop plans, in this case the plans for the sale of Christmas trees and firewood.

Once again, I would like to clarify that this amendment does not do that. It does not require anything of regional foresters.

Instead, it requires special consideration for project proposals under the collaborative forest landscape restoration program that seek to facilitate the sale of Christmas trees and firewood on lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior.

The landscape restoration program was not created for the sole purpose of revenue building by removing trees from public lands. The program is meant to do what it says in its program title: promote collaboration among Federal land management agencies and the public for the purposes of restoring forest landscapes.

Tree harvesting for anything other than the purpose of landscape restoration is not in the spirit of the program. By placing a preference on projects that are related to Christmas tree harvest, this amendment would limit the landscape restoration program by prioritizing a marketable product over landscape restoration. To be extra clear, the Forest Service already has broad authority to conduct the sale of firewood and Christmas trees. They don't need it under this restoration program.

Mr. Chair, I urge a "no" vote, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, it is so sad to hear my colleagues on the other side of the aisle hate Christmas.

This would allow restoration of our forests. As I said, our forests are overgrown. This would allow a fun way for families to participate in healthy forest management by thinning some of the living trees that are overgrown on our forestland.

Mr. Chair, I, again, urge the adoption of this amendment.

Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding and for her amendment.

Mr. Chair, I note that over 2.3 million households rely on firewood to heat

their homes. I didn't say they enjoy a nice evening by the fire. They rely on firewood to heat their homes. It is even more common in western, rural communities near Federal lands, especially in counties with significant Native American communities.

The Forest Service has made some positive efforts with programs like Wood For Life, which provides firewood from forest restoration projects in northern Arizona to local Tribal communities that otherwise could not afford to heat their homes.

Providing ample firewood sources to these communities is an essential and cost-effective service the Forest Service should be helping to provide.

Also, for as little as \$5, more than 300,000 American families receive a Christmas tree permit from Forest Service properties each year. This not only helps Americans celebrate the Christmas season, but it also helps manage our forests through the removal of forest products that may otherwise fuel the next wildland fire.

I commend Representative BOEBERT for her work on this creative and thoughtful amendment that can make a big difference in the lives of rural Americans, and I urge its support.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chairman, may I inquire how much time is remaining.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Colorado has 1 minute remaining.

Ms. BOEBERT. Mr. Chair, this legislative proposal is an excellent example of how local solutions can make a big difference in managing our environment and mitigating risk. The success of Christmas tree and firewood harvesting operations in Colorado are a testament to the power of human ingenuity when it is coupled with a deep understanding of local environments and needs. These operations help to thin overgrown forests, reducing the fuel load and therefore the risk of uncontrollable wildfires. They also provide valuable resources to the local communities turning what could be a negative, overgrown forests, into a positive, holiday trees and firewood for heating.

Mr. Chair, I urge adoption of the amendment in the spirit of Christmas and heating homes efficiently, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, as a Christian, I am offended that my colleague on the other side of the aisle would suggest that I hate Christmas.

This bill is not about and has nothing to do with inhibiting people from celebrating their religious holidays, including through having a Christmas tree.

This bill is about this amendment, and this debate is about the fact that this amendment does not do what the gentlewoman from Colorado claims that it does.

This bill does not require regional foresters to do anything.

I support the Forest Service using its existing authority to permit the harvesting of Christmas trees and trees for firewood, but that is not what this amendment actually does.

I close by observing to my colleague that many of us make happy family memories with trees that are living. We have ways to enjoy trees without cutting them down or burning them.

Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentlewoman from Colorado (Ms. BOEBERT).

The amendment was agreed to.

AMENDMENT NO. 16 OFFERED BY MR. LALOTA

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 16 printed in part D of House Report 118-705.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Chair, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

At the end of title III add the following:

SEC. 307. STUDY ON PINE BEETLE INFESTATION.

Not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—

(1) carry out a study on the causes and effects of, and solutions for, the infestation of pine beetles in the North Eastern region of the United States; and

(2) submit to the relevant Congressional Committees a report that includes the results of the study required under paragraph (1).

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 1486, the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Chair, I thank the chairman for his leadership.

Mr. Chairman, the southern pine beetle, a pest no larger than a grain of rice, has emerged as one of the most significant threats to our forests in the eastern United States. Nowhere is this issue more evident than in my home district on Long Island, where Suffolk County has been hit especially hard.

Since the pine beetle first appeared on Long Island in 2014, it has destroyed approximately 5,000 acres of forest, including an estimated 800 acres this year alone.

The pine barrens region in Suffolk County is suffering devastation, as countless once-green trees have turned yellow and orange, clear evidence that they are dying. This damage doesn't just affect the trees. It threatens an ecosystem that is home to dozens of animals and plants, including endangered species.

These forests are crucial for preserving clean drinking water, and if we don't take action now, we risk irreparable harm to this vital resource. State officials have been working tirelessly to manage the spread of the beetle through surveillance and the re-

moval of dead and infested trees. However, this problem is growing exponentially due to warmer winters and drought conditions, and we need a more comprehensive approach to understand and combat this threat.

That is why my amendment here today is so important.

Mr. Chairman, my commonsense amendment would direct the Secretary of Agriculture to conduct a comprehensive study on the impact of beetle infestations in the northeastern region of the United States.

The detailed study will investigate the causes, effects, and potential solutions to this growing problem, with a particular focus on our forests in the northeast.

This amendment is about more than just studying a pest. It is about protecting the natural heritage of the northeast, securing clean water, and ensuring the health and resiliency of our forests for future generations.

A comprehensive study will help us understand why these beetles have moved north and how we can mitigate their impact. It will provide the scientific foundation needed to implement effective management strategies, preserve our forests, and maintain the ecological balance that is so vital to the region.

Mr. Chair, I thank Chairman WESTERMAN for his support on this amendment and his leadership on the Fix Our Forests Act, and I urge my colleagues to support this commonsense amendment.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, I ask unanimous consent to claim the time in opposition, although I am not opposed to it.

The Acting CHAIR. Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from California?

There was no objection.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from California is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I am going to close out my comments on all of these amendments by reiterating what I have been saying.

I strongly oppose the underlying bill. It is full of poison pills that harm the environment and will spread our Forest Service even thinner right when we need them most.

If Republicans had listened to the administration's concerns about how this bill is poorly drafted, and if they hadn't excluded committee Democrats from the drafting process then maybe we could have a consensus set of solutions in front of us.

Instead, we have a bill full of environmental rollbacks, new unfunded programs that will spread our Forest Service thin, and no pay fix for our firefighters. It is a supposed wildfire response bill, but it doesn't have firefighter pay in it.

It is a bill that is being offered by Republicans who style themselves as fiscally conservative. Yet, as we approach a final vote on this legislation in a

matter of minutes, we do not know the costs of the bill because Republicans through a rushed process made sure that the Congressional Budget Office did not have a chance to score the bill.

Nothing in this amendment addresses any of these extensive and serious concerns.

I strongly oppose the bill, as does Ranking Member GRIJALVA, as does the White House.

Mr. Chair, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Chair, I yield to the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. WESTERMAN).

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Chair, I thank the gentleman from New York for yielding.

Mr. Chair, I thank my friend, Representative LALOTA, for filing this amendment which seeks to address the serious threat to forests in the American northeast. The amendment does require the Forest Service to conduct a study on the causes and effects of the infestation of pine beetles in the northeastern region of the U.S. and offer solutions to the pressing problem.

The southern pine beetle is an invasive species that has been expanding into northeastern forests in recent years. As a southerner, I wish all the southern pine beetles would leave the South, but I don't wish them on my friends in the North.

It is an invasive species that poses a serious threat to the health of pine forests in the North.

Concerning tree mortality has been documented in recent years in pitch pine stands in several northeastern States, including New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut.

The expansion of this invasive species into northern forests is concerning and warrants our attention.

This is a good amendment that addresses a very real threat to forests in the northeast. Examining this threat further and developing solutions to prevent, treat, and detect insect infestations is an important endeavor.

I, again, applaud Representative LALOTA for his leadership in this effort, and I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. LALOTA. Mr. Chair, I yield back the balance of my time.

The Acting CHAIR (Mr. MOONEY). The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from New York (Mr. LALOTA).

The amendment was agreed to.

The Acting CHAIR. There being no further amendments, under the rule, the Committee rises.

Accordingly, the Committee rose; and the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. ELLZEY) having assumed the chair, Mr. MOONEY, Acting Chair of the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union, reported that that Committee, having had under consideration the bill (H.R. 8790) to expedite under the National Environmental Policy Act

of 1969 and improve forest management activities on National Forest System lands, on public lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, and on Tribal lands to return resilience to overgrown, fire-prone forested lands, and for other purposes, and, pursuant to House Resolution 1486, he reported the bill, as amended by that resolution, back to the House with sundry further amendments adopted in the Committee of the Whole.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the rule, the previous question is ordered.

Is a separate vote demanded on any further amendment reported from the Committee of the Whole? If not, the Chair will put them en gros.

The amendments were agreed to.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the engrossment and third reading of the bill.

The bill was ordered to be engrossed and read a third time, and was read the third time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on passage of the bill.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Ms. PORTER. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The vote was taken by electronic device, and there were—yeas 268, nays 151, not voting 13, as follows:

[Roll No. 448]

YEAS—268

Aderholt	Cole	Gonzales, Tony
Aguilar	Collins	Gonzalez, V.
Alford	Comer	Good (VA)
Allen	Correa	Gooden (TX)
Allred	Costa	Gosar
Amodei	Craig	Graves (LA)
Armstrong	Crane	Graves (MO)
Arrington	Crawford	Green (TN)
Auchincloss	Crenshaw	Griffith
Babin	Cuellar	Grothman
Bacon	Curtis	Guest
Baird	D'Esposito	Guthrie
Balderson	David (KS)	Hageman
Banks	Davidson	Harder (CA)
Barr	Davis (NC)	Harris
Bean (FL)	De La Cruz	Harshbarger
Bentz	Diaz-Balart	Hern
Bera	Donalds	Higgins (LA)
Bergman	Duarte	Hill
Bice	Duncan	Himes
Biggs	Dunn (FL)	Hinson
Bilirakis	Edwards	Houchin
Bishop (GA)	Ellzey	Houlahan
Bishop (NC)	Emmer	Hoyer
Boebert	Eshoo	Hudson
Bost	Estes	Huizenga
Brecheen	Ezell	Hunt
Buchanan	Fallon	Issa
Bucshon	Feenstra	Jackson (NC)
Budzinski	Ferguson	Jackson (TX)
Burchett	Finstad	James
Burgess	Fisbach	Johnson (LA)
Burlison	Fitzgerald	Johnson (SD)
Calvert	Fitzpatrick	Jordan
Cammack	Fleischmann	Joyce (OH)
Caraveo	Flood	Joyce (PA)
Cardenas	Fong	Kaptur
Carey	Fox	Kean (NJ)
Carl	Franklin, Scott	Kelly (MS)
Carter (LA)	Fry	Kelly (PA)
Carter (TX)	Fulcher	Kiggans (VA)
Cartwright	Gaetz	Kiley
Chavez-DeRemer	Gallego	Kim (CA)
Ciscomani	Garamendi	Krishnamoorthi
Cline	Garbarino	Kuster
Cloud	Garcia, Mike	Kustoff
Clyburn	Gimenez	LaHood
Clyde	Golden (ME)	LaLota

LaMalfa	Newhouse	Smith (NE)
Lamborn	Nickel	Smith (NJ)
Langworthy	Norman	Smucker
Latta	Nunn (IA)	Spanberger
LaTurner	Obenolte	Spartz
Lawler	Ogles	Stanton
Lee (FL)	Owens	Stauber
Lee (NV)	Palmer	Steel
Lesko	Panetta	Stefanik
Letlow	Pappas	Steil
Lopez	Pelosi	Steube
Loudermilk	Peltola	Strong
Lucas	Pence	Suozi
Luna	Perez	Tenney
Luttrell	Perry	Thompson (CA)
Mace	Peters	Thompson (MS)
Malliotakis	Pettersen	Thompson (PA)
Maloy	Pluger	Tiffany
Mann	Posey	Timmons
Manning	Reschenthaler	Torres (CA)
Massie	Rodgers (WA)	Turner
Mast	Rogers (AL)	Valadao
McCaul	Rogers (KY)	Van Drew
McClain	Rose	Van Dwyne
McClintock	Rosendale	Van Orden
McCormick	Rouzer	Vasquez
McHenry	Roy	Veasey
Meuser	Ruiz	Wagner
Miller (IL)	Rulli	Walberg
Miller (OH)	Rutherford	Waltz
Miller (WV)	Salazar	Weber (TX)
Miller-Meeks	Scalise	Webster (FL)
Mills	Scholten	Wenstrup
Molinaro	Schrier	Westerman
Moolenaar	Schweikert	Williams (NY)
Mooney	Scott, Austin	Williams (TX)
Moore (AL)	Self	Wilson (SC)
Moore (UT)	Sessions	Wittman
Moran	Sherrill	Womack
Mrvan	Simpson	Yakym
Mullin	Slotkin	
Murphy	Smith (MO)	

NAYS—151

Adams	Gottheimer	Omar
Amo	Green, Al (TX)	Pallone
Balint	Hayes	Phillips
Barragan	Horsford	Pingree
Beatty	Hoyle (OR)	Pocan
Beyer	Huffman	Porter
Blumenauer	Ivey	Pressley
Blunt Rochester	Jackson (IL)	Quigley
Bonamici	Jacobs	Ramirez
Boyle (PA)	Jayapal	Raskin
Brown	Jeffries	Ross
Brownley	Johnson (GA)	Ruppersberger
Bush	Kamlager-Dove	Ryan
Carbajal	Keating	Salinas
Carson	Kelly (IL)	Sánchez
Casar	Kennedy	Sarbanes
Case	Khanna	Scanlon
Casten	Kildee	Schakowsky
Castor (FL)	Kilmer	Schiff
Castro (TX)	Kim (NJ)	Schneider
Cherfilus-	Landsman	Scott (VA)
McCormick	Larsen (WA)	Scott, David
Chu	Larson (CT)	Sewell
Clark (MA)	Lee (CA)	Sherman
Clarke (NY)	Lee (PA)	Smith (WA)
Cleaver	Leger Fernandez	Sorensen
Cohen	Levin	Soto
Connolly	Lieu	Stansbury
Courtney	Lofgren	Stevens
Crockett	Lynch	Strickland
Crow	Magaziner	Swalwell
Davis (IL)	Matsui	Sykes
Dean (PA)	McBath	Takano
DeGette	McClellan	Thanedar
DeLauro	McCollum	Titus
DelBene	McGarvey	Tlaib
Deluzio	McGovern	Tokuda
DeSaulnier	McIver	Tonko
Dingell	Menendez	Torres (NY)
Doggett	Meng	Trahan
Escobar	Mfume	Trone
Espallat	Moore (WI)	Underwood
Fletcher	Morelle	Vargas
Foster	Moskowitz	Velázquez
Fouchee	Moulton	Wasserman
Frankel, Lois	Nadler	Schultz
Garcia (IL)	Napolitano	Waters
Garcia (TX)	Neal	Watson Coleman
Garcia, Robert	Neguse	Wild
Goldman (NY)	Norcross	Williams (GA)
Gomez	Ocasio-Cortez	Wilson (FL)

NOT VOTING—13

Bowman	DesJarlais	Frost
Carter (GA)	Evans	Granger

Greene (GA) Meeks Zinke
Grijalva Nehls
Luetkemeyer Wexton

□ 1737

Ms. ESHOO and Messrs. THOMPSON of Mississippi, SCHWEIKERT, and BISHOP of Georgia changed their vote from “nay” to “yea.”

So the bill was passed.

The result of the vote was announced as above recorded.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

Mr. CARTER of Georgia. Mr. Speaker, I was unavoidably detained. Had I been present, I would have voted Yea on Roll Call No. 443, Yea on Roll Call No. 444, Yea on Roll Call No. 445, Yea on Roll Call No. 446, Yea on Roll Call No. 447, and Yea on Roll Call No. 448.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GUEST). The Chair will remind all persons in the gallery that they are here as guests of the House and that any manifestation of approval or disapproval of proceedings is in violation of the rules of the House.

ELECTING A MEMBER TO CERTAIN
STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Mr. AGUILAR. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 1492

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and is hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY: Mrs. McIver (to rank immediately after Mr. Kennedy).

COMMITTEE ON SMALL BUSINESS: Mrs. McIver.

Mr. AGUILAR (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

AUTHORIZING THE CLERK TO
MAKE CORRECTIONS IN EN-
GROSSMENT OF H.R. 8790, FIX
OUR FORESTS ACT

Mr. WESTERMAN. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the Clerk be authorized to make technical corrections in the engrossment of H.R. 8790, to include corrections in spelling, punctuation, section and title numbering, cross-referencing, conforming amendments to the table of contents

and short titles, and the insertion of appropriate headings.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Arkansas?

There was no objection.

MOMENT OF SILENCE FOR
BIRMINGHAM SHOOTING VICTIMS

(Ms. SEWELL asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SEWELL. Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness that I rise to recognize the victims of the horrific mass shooting that rattled my Birmingham, Alabama, community over the weekend.

On Saturday night, just after 11 p.m., 21 people were shot in Birmingham's Five Points South entertainment district, and four lost their lives.

Our thoughts are with the families as they endure this unimaginable loss, and we pray for a speedy recovery for those that were injured.

James 2:26 teaches us that faith without works is dead. While our thoughts and prayers are important, only by taking meaningful action can we stem this needless loss of life.

Elected officials at every level must do all we can to eliminate the epidemic of gun violence that is raging in our communities. It is past time for Congress to act.

I ask my colleagues to join me in a moment of silence for the Birmingham victims of Saturday night's mass shooting and their families.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER
PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, the Chair will postpone further proceedings today on motions to suspend the rules on which a recorded vote or the yeas and nays are ordered.

The House will resume proceedings on postponed questions at a later time.

□ 1745

MICHEL O. MACEDA MEMORIAL
ACT

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 5302) to designate the Air and Marine Operations Marine Unit of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection located at 101 Km 18.5 in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, as the “Michel O. Maceda Marine Unit”.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 5302

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

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the “Michel O. Maceda Memorial Act”.

SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress finds the following:

(1) Marine Interdiction Agent Michel O. Maceda served honorably in the United

States Army as a wheeled vehicle mechanic prior to joining the United States Border Patrol as an Agent in Douglas, Arizona, in April 2016.

(2) Agent Maceda became a Marine Interdiction Agent with U.S. Customs and Border Protection, Air and Marine Operations in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, in 2021.

(3) On November 17, 2022, Agent Maceda and 2 other agents were conducting a drug interdiction stop off the coast of Puerto Rico, during which the agents boarded the target vessel.

(4) During the stop, Agent Maceda was mortally wounded when 1 of the occupants of the vessel shot the boarding agents with a firearm.

(5) Agent Maceda is survived by his daughter, brother, and parents.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION.

The Air and Marine Operations Marine Unit of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection located at 101 Km 18.5 in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, shall forever be known and designated as the “Michel O. Maceda Marine Unit”.

SEC. 4. REFERENCES.

Any reference in a law, map, regulation, document, paper, or other record of the United States to the marine unit referred to in section 3 shall be deemed to be a reference to the “Michel O. Maceda Marine Unit”.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. GREEN) and the gentleman from California (Mr. CORREA) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Tennessee.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the measure under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Tennessee?

There was no objection.

Mr. GREEN of Tennessee. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise today in strong support of H.R. 5302, the Michel O. Maceda Memorial Act.

On November 17, 2022, Marine Interdiction Agent Michel Maceda was conducting a drug interdiction stopped 14 miles off the coast of Puerto Rico when he was tragically mortally wounded in a firefight with drug smugglers. Agent Maceda's heroism and service to our country is a debt that can never be repaid.

This legislation would designate Air and Marine Operations Unit in Cabo Rojo, Puerto Rico, as the Michel O. Maceda Marine Unit. I urge all of my colleagues to support this gesture, recognizing a monumental hero.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. CORREA. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we are considering H.R. 5302, the Michel O. Maceda Memorial Act. This legislation reminds us of the men and women in law enforcement and the risks that they face every day to keep our communities safe. Marine Interdiction