

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 21, 2023

The Honorable Randy Moore
Chief
United States Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Moore,

As we enter the 2023 fire season, it is necessary to review and analyze not just our short term wildfire suppression tactics, but also our long-term wildfire prevention plans. We know that active forest management is the best action we can employ when it comes to preventing catastrophic wildfires. Decades of wildfire suppression have led to enormous buildups of fuels in our forests, which must be removed without delay.

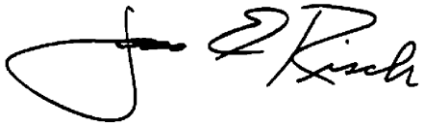
Congress has directed the Forest Service to manage the National Forest System for multiple use. These uses not only include outdoor recreation and wildlife habitat, but timber production as well. Forest products companies are great allies for active forest management, especially when it comes to fuels reduction. By partnering with forest products companies, we are able to more easily remove fuels from our forests while taking full advantage of the value of the wood products removed. Increasing timber production in our national forests will simultaneously remove dangerous fuels, reduce fire and disease risks, reinvigorate sawmill infrastructure, and revitalize rural economies.

Unfortunately, the Forest Service has let timber harvests stagnate on public lands, regardless of authorized levels and congressional direction. Harvest is taking place on only .1% of NFS acres each year, which leaves the National Forests overstocked and increasingly susceptible to bugs and fire, with reduced habitat diversity. The Forest Service has sold an average of 2.5B board feet per year for the last two decades, less than half of the allowable sale quantity called for in current forest plans. This has led directly to the loss of forest management capacity as mills have closed and logging infrastructure has disappeared.

As the Forest Service looks to take advantage of historic levels of funding provided by Congress to reduce hazardous fuel loads, we encourage the agency to analyze how much standing sawtimber and other high value products there are within high priority firehedges and insect and disease treatment areas, as well as in wildland urban interface areas. Having a clearer picture of potentially available fiber supplies will assist the private sector in making investment decisions that can support needed fuels reduction work. As a land managing agency, the Forest Service has

a responsibility to utilize all possible solutions to reduce fire. If this analysis of standing sawtimber has already been completed, please share that existing data. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of James E. Risch in black ink.

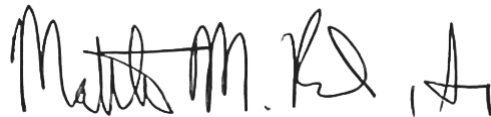
James E. Risch
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Steve Daines in blue ink.

Steve Daines
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Mike Crapo in blue ink.

Mike Crapo
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr. in black ink.

Matthew M. Rosendale, Sr.
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Russ Fulcher in black ink.

Russ Fulcher
Member of Congress

Handwritten signature of Ryan K. Zinke in black ink.

Ryan K. Zinke
Member of Congress