

March 12, 2013

Honorable Doc Hastings  
Chairman  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1203 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Edward Markey  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2108 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Hastings and Ranking Member Markey,

The undersigned organizations—representing millions of conservationists, farmers, ranchers, forest and rangeland managers, energy producers, hunters, and anglers—strongly support the *Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act*, H.R. 818.

The devastating wildfires throughout the western United States in 2012 are a symptom of the deteriorating health of our forests. Lack of management, drought conditions, and pest infestations have left much of the West with extreme wildfire conditions. As groups whose members work to conserve natural resources for multiple uses, such as watershed health, grazing, timber harvest, energy development and transmission, exploration, recreation, hunting, and fishing, we are deeply concerned as to the effects wildfires have on the landscape. Additionally, there is consensus that forest management practices, such as thinning and prescribed burns, can help prevent these catastrophic wildfires.

H.R. 818 gives states the authority to identify areas currently impacted by or which pose a future risk of fire due to the bark beetle epidemic, drought, or deteriorating forest health conditions, and put in place emergency hazardous fuels reduction projects to address these conditions. H.R. 818 also allows the use of provisions for streamlining administrative and environmental processes, similar to those from the Healthy Forests Restoration Act, when applied to emergency hazardous fuels projects.

Furthermore, the legislation provides the Departments of Agriculture and Interior valuable tools to expedite fuels reduction programs. Such tools include expansion of the “good-neighbor authority” used to expedite cooperation between the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and state foresters for forest, rangeland, and watershed restoration and protection. This type of cooperation will enhance landscape level conservation practices and help address forest health and wildfire concerns.

We urge the Committee to bring H.R. 818 up for consideration to provide land managers the necessary tools to address forest health and management. Thank you for your consideration on this important legislation. We look forward to working with you to implement these common sense reforms that would reduce catastrophic wildfires and improve overall forest health.

Support of H.R. 818—*Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act*

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation  
American Forest Foundation  
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies  
National Association of Conservation Districts  
National Association of Counties  
National Association of State Foresters  
National Cattlemen's Beef Association  
National Wild Turkey Federation  
Public Lands Council  
Quality Deer Management Association  
Safari Club International  
Society for Range Management  
Tread Lightly!  
Western Energy Alliance

CC: Members of the House Committee on Natural Resources