

# Forest Legislative Activity on Public Lands

## Catastrophic Wildfire



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# Catastrophic Wildfire

## How Would I define that term ?

- Wildfire events that are uncharacteristic in scale and severity with long term soil degradation leading to forest plant community “type conversions” beyond the natural range of variability.
  - ❖ Stated Ecologically - ecological retrogression of at least two or more seral stages.

## Does not focus on

- Fire that is playing its natural role of maintenance or even stand replacing within historic proportions on the landscape.
- The goal is to allow fire to play its natural role but not to eliminate all fire through suppression.

## Uncharacteristic Fires most often precipitated by

- Past manipulation of forest species compositions and age classes using poor Silvicultural Practices
- Fire suppression and exclusion history
- Insect and disease epidemics caused by the two aforementioned preconditions
- Climate Change and climate cycles
- Arson

# National Wildfire Institute

## Who are we?

- A nation wide coalition of retired Land Management Agency Leaders
  - Undersecretary's of AG and Interior
  - USFS Chief's
  - National/Regional Directors of Fire, NF Systems, Research, Personnel Mgmt.
  - Forest Supervisors/District Rangers
  - Retired and serving National Type 1 incident Commanders

## Our Focus

- Legislative and agency policy development and its review for efficient science based management of our public lands and agency programs to promote fire resiliency, healthy forest conditions and rural community economic vitality.
- Consultation engagement regarding program delivery and Fire response with agency leadership at all levels of government.
- Continuous interaction with Congressional and Senate Natural Resource Leadership for program review and effectiveness.
- Produce white papers for Presidential Transition Teams to make recommendations on program and leadership position management within AG and DOI departments.

# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### **Forest Service Management Funding Summary:**

- \$1.9 Billion, to remain available through September 30, 2021

#### **Funding Direction:**

- \$40 Million shall be deposited in the Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Fund for ecological restoration treatments.
- \$366 Million shall be for forest products.
- \$430 Million shall be for hazardous fuels management activities, of which not to exceed \$15 Million for grants using “State and Private Forestry” appropriation to create incentives for increased use of biomass from National Forest System lands.
- \$15 Million may be used by the Secretary for procurement contracts or cooperative agreements or grants for:
  - Hazardous fuels management activities.
  - Training.
  - Monitoring hazardous fuels activities on Federal land, or on non-Federal land if the activities benefit resources on Federal land.

# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## Forest Policy Highlights

### **WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT** (TRANSFERS OF FUNDS)

#### **Category Priorities:**

- Forest fire pre-suppression activities
- Emergency wildland fire suppression on NF Land and lands under a fire protection agreement.
- Emergency rehabilitation of burned-over National Forest System lands \$2.8 Billion.



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## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### ➤ **BIOMASS ENERGY National Policy-Interagency Collaboration**

To support the key role that forests contribute to energy needs of the United States, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall, consistent with their missions, jointly:

- Ensure that Federal policy relating to forest bioenergy is consistent across all public land agencies
- Establish clear and simple policies for the use of forest biomass as an energy solution, including policies that— reflect the carbon-neutrality of forest bioenergy and recognize biomass as a renewable energy source, provided the use of forest biomass for energy production does not cause conversion of forests to non-forest use.
- Encourage private investment throughout the forest biomass supply chain, for -
  - working forests
  - harvesting operations
  - Forest improvement operations
  - Forest bioenergy production
  - Wood products manufacturing; or paper manufacturing
- Encourage forest management to improve forest health
- Recognize State initiatives to produce and use forest biomass.

# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### **10 year rolling average fire fix – End of Fire Borrowing WILDFIRE AND DISASTER FUNDING ADJUSTMENT Procedures**

#### **WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION - NEW BUDGET AUTHORITY**—\_starting in *FY 2020 through 2027*

- Makes Fire funding at a fixed appropriation in the Wildland Fire Management accounts at the Department of Agriculture or the Department of the Interior.
  - Adjustments for that fiscal year shall be the amount of the additional new budget authority provided in that Act but shall not exceed—
  - Fiscal year 2020, \$2.2B
  - Fiscal year 2021, \$2.3B
  - Fiscal year 2022, \$2.4B
  - Fiscal year 2023, \$2.5B
  - Fiscal year 2024, \$2.6B
  - Fiscal year 2025, \$2.7B
  - Fiscal year 2026, \$2.8B
  - Fiscal year 2027, \$2.9B

#### ***When FY Appropriation is Exceeded* - REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDS.**

- If the amount provided for wildfire suppression operations for that fiscal year will be exhausted within 30 calendar days;
- ❖ The Secretary's in conjunction with the Director of OMB shall promptly submit a request to Congress for supplemental appropriations.

# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### **WILDFIRE RESILIENCE PROJECTS.**

- Hazardous fuels reduction projects as defined in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The action may be categorically excluded and are exempt from the special administrative review process

### **Definition: COLLABORATIVE RESTORATION PROJECT.**

A project to carry out forest restoration treatments that -

- Maximizes the retention of old-growth and large trees
- Promote stands that are resilient to insects and disease, and reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, wildfires
- Considers the best available scientific information to maintain or restore the ecological integrity, including maintaining or restoring structure, function, composition, and connectivity
- Developed and implemented through a collaborative process

### **LIMITATIONS**

- PROJECT SIZE may not exceed 3000 acres.
- LOCATION.—A project under this section shall be—
  1. Prioritized within the wildland-urban interface
  2. If located outside the wildland-urban interface, limited to areas within Condition Classes 2 or 3 in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III that contain very high wildfire hazard potential
- Existing Roads may be used including repairs and Maint.
- A project shall not include the establishment of new permanent roads.
- The Secretary shall decommission any temporary road constructed under a project not later than 3 years after project is completed.



# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### **Stewardship Contracting – Extended to 20 Years**

- The Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior may award contracts or agreements for 20 years on areas where the majority of Federal lands are in Fire Regime Groups I, II, or III.
- The Secretary may, give a procurement preference to a contractor that would, as part of the contract, promote an innovative use of forest products, including cross-laminated timber.

# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### **Minor Programs - WILDFIRE HAZARD SEVERITY MAPPING FOR COMMUNITIES.**

- Within 2 years after the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, shall—
- Develop and publish a geospatial map that depicts wildfire hazard severity to inform at-risk communities adjacent to National Forest System lands or affected by wildland fire
- Disseminate the information under paragraph in web-based format for use by such communities to—
  - (A) improve understanding of their risk profile;
  - (B) clarify thinking on the nature and effect of wildfire risks; and
  - (C) develop plans to manage and mitigate those risks.

### **PURPOSES OF MAP**

- To inform evaluations of wildfire risk.
- To prioritize fuels management needs.
- To depict the relative potential for wildfire that could be difficult for suppression resources to contain and that could cause ignitions to structures.

# **2018 Omnibus Legislation-HR 1625**

## **Forest Policy Highlights**

### **Minor Programs**

#### **☐ VEGETATION MANAGMENT, FACILITY INSPECTION, AND OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE RELATING TO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION AND DISTRIBUTION FACILITY RIGHTS OF WAY.**

- Defines the removal of hazard trees and brush for removal from transmission line rights of ways by developing a vegetation management plan.

#### **When a plan is in place –**

- No case by case analysis is necessary.

#### **☐ EXTENSION OF SECURE RURAL SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 2000**

- 2 Year extension of SRS Payments



# 2018 Farm Bill - Draft

## Forest Policy Highlights

### House Bill HR 2

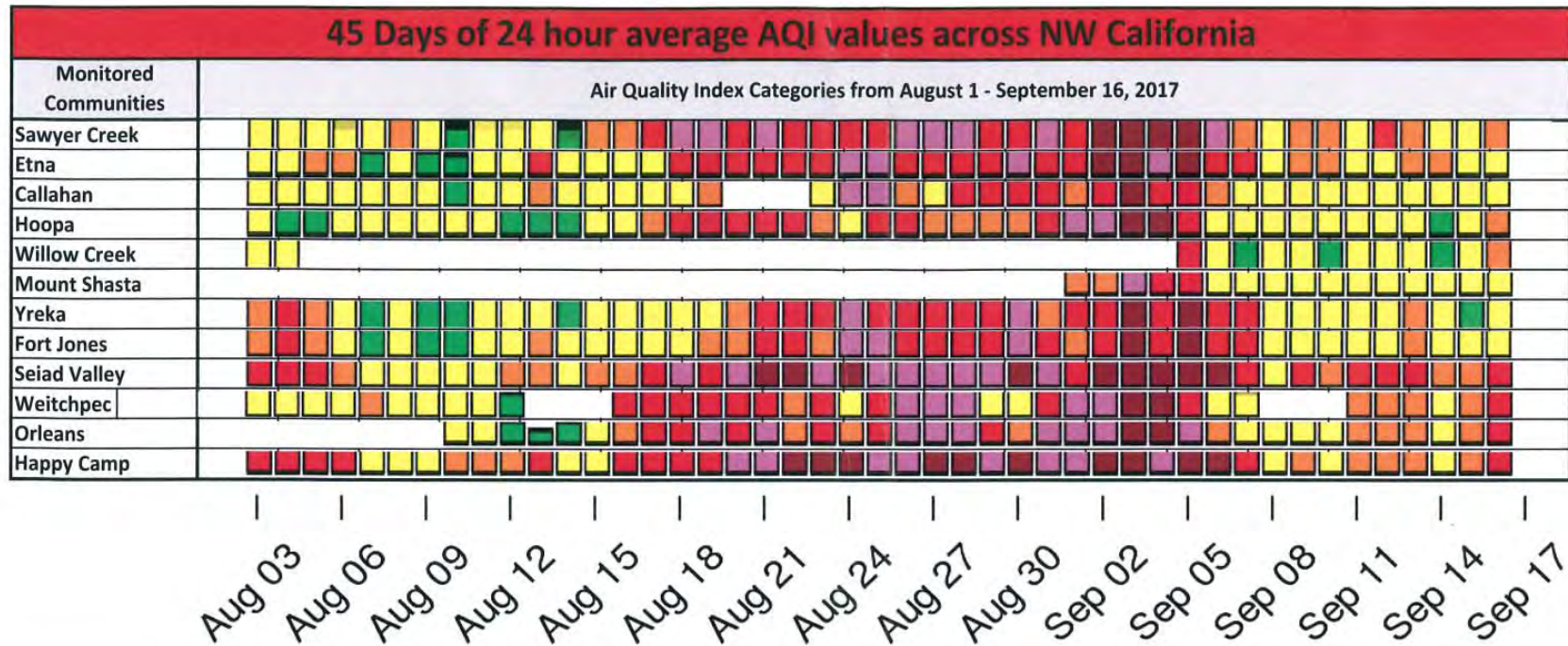
Status – Out of committee, Introduced , no Floor vote

- Establish a landscape-scale restoration program to support landscape-scale restoration and management-improvements to public benefits derived from State and private forest land.
- Chief of the Forest Service shall establish a competitive grant program to be known as the 'Community Wood Energy and Wood Innovation Program'.
- Clarification of Healthy Forest Restoration Act and minor revisions.
- RAC Program reauthorization
- Focus on reforestation of burned areas.
- ESA reforms regarding Section 7 consultation timeliness and authorities.
- Categorical Exclusion authorities expanded to address an insect or disease infestation; to reduce hazardous fuel loads; to protect a municipal water source; to maintain, enhance, or modify critical habitat to protect it from catastrophic disturbances; to increase water yield not to exceed 6,000 acres.
- Categorical Exclusion not to exceed 6,000 acres for burned area and salvage with Stream Buffer plans and reforestation plans developed.
- Ce's for Wildlife enhancement, early seral wildlife habitat, fire resiliency, hazard tree removal and infrastructure and administration sites.
- Expansion of Good Neighbor Authority.



# Public Safety and Smoke

## 2017 KNF Smoke Monitor Data

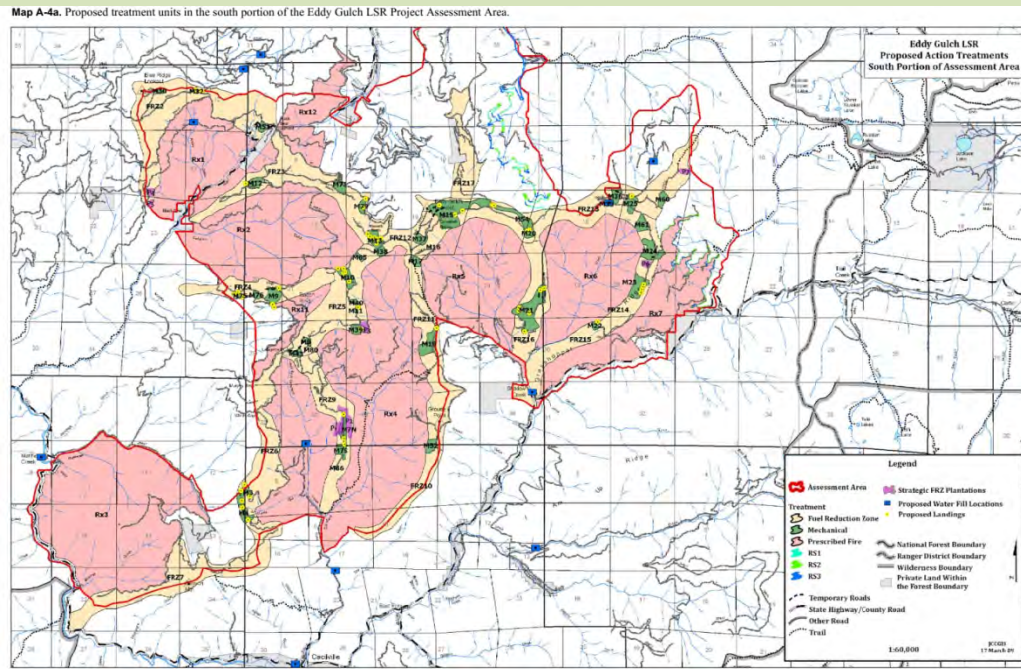


Monitor Locations	AKA
Etna-Cemetery Alley	Sawyers Bar
Etna-College Street	Etna
Callahan-California 3	Callahan
Hoopa-Bloody Camp Road	Hoopa
Willow Creek-California 96	Willow Creek
Mount Shasta-West Lake Street	Mount Shasta
Yreka-South Foothill Drive	Yreka
Fort Jones-Bridge Street	Fort Jones
Seiad Valley-California 96	Seiad Valley
Orleans-Weitchpec School Road	Weitchpec
Orleans-Ishi-Pishi Road	Orleans
Happy Camp-Klamath River Highway	Happy Camp

Air Quality Index (AQI)	Actions to Protect Yourself
Good	None
Moderate	Unusually sensitive individuals should consider limiting prolonged or heavy exertion.
USG	People within Sensitive Groups* should <b>reduce</b> prolonged or heavy outdoor exertion.
Unhealthy	People within Sensitive Groups* should <b>avoid all</b> physical outdoor activity.
Very Unhealthy	Everyone should avoid prolonged or heavy exertion.
Hazardous	Everyone should avoid any outdoor activity.

# Where to from Here?

## Landscape Planning



## More Legislation

Write more laws to revamp old law?

Review law to keep what works and rescind antiquated policy?

Place a new focus on modern Forest Ecology legislation?

# Public Perceptions

Smoke, Forest Projects, Prescribed Fire, Fire Suppression



What will the public accept or tolerate on public lands?

- I don't know - recent prolonged smoke exposure is now driving a emotionally charged national narrative.

# Questions?