



Adam Trupp, Chief Executive Officer
adam@uacnet.org

Celeste Maloy, Policy Advisor on Public Lands
and Intergovernmental Relations
celeste@uacnet.org

5397 South Vine Street, Murray, UT 84107 Phone: (801) 265-1331 Fax: (801) 265-9485

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Chairman John Barrasso
U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510-6175

RE: Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Act of 2017

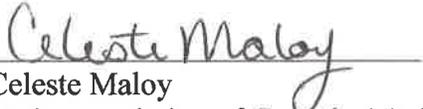
Dear Chairman Barrasso:

The Utah Association of Counties supports the Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Act of 2017 because it provides flexibility and good management policy to public forest management. We believe that good forest management is driven by scientific data and credible economic study. Lawsuits have dictated too much forest management policy in recent decades. Our counties applaud the flexibility the bill provides in managing habitat for wildlife species that are under the state's jurisdiction. Flexibility and science should be the backbone of management.

Utah's counties have long been calling for forest management that will protect our communities from catastrophic wildfires. We have watched in bewilderment as trees killed by insects and disease were protected from logging by lawsuits. We predicted hazardous fire conditions if standing dead timber wasn't removed. For decades we have clamored for better management that would allow the harvest of dead trees. We all knew that removing the trees would be beneficial to our economies as well as forest health. We all knew that if a fire ever caught in the dead timber, it would be difficult to control. Despite the obvious nature of the threat, the dead timber has remained on our mountains. This year we have had the enormous fires that have long been predicted.

The Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Act of 2017 would prevent the repetition of the mistakes that led to the tragic 2017 wild fire season. We support the bill because it will limit the management by lawsuit so that forests can be managed with best practices. We also support the bill because it allows a more efficient decision making process for proven management practices that urgently need to be implemented. Finally, we support the bill because it protects the sustainability of the wildlife and vegetation that make up our public forests.

Sincerely,


Celeste Maloy
Utah Association of Counties' Public Lands Policy Advisor