



October 24, 2017

The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment & Public Works  
513 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Act (WPMA) of 2017

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

I am writing today on behalf of the Tennessee Wildlife Federation. Our organization represents hunters, anglers, outdoor enthusiasts, and conservationists. We strongly support the draft Wildfire Prevention and Mitigation Act (WPMA) of 2017.

Catastrophic wildfire is a symptom of compromised forest health and millions more acres of our nation's forests are at severe risk from fires, insects and disease. Across our nation, several factors are driving longer, record-setting wildfire seasons, including hotter and drier conditions, lack of consistent active management of our national forests. Inadequate funding levels for the US Forest Service's forest health and restoration accounts are compounding the issue. We must take action to address these issues before more irreparable damage is done, and additional lives and property lost.

Notably, proposals for further improving forest management and addressing the wildfire funding framework have failed to be enacted in Congress. The Federation believes that everything possible should be done to accelerate the urgent work needed to best manage forests, fire and wildlife in our National Forests. The fire crisis has refocused forest policy on to the restoration of wildlife habitat benefits and other ecological conditions. Giving federal land management agencies new authority to improve the efficiency of the environmental review process can help accelerate the pace of restoration projects processes. Focusing Endangered Species Act consultation requirements at the project-level, rather than having to redevelop entire forest plans can also help with the timely facilitation of landscape habitat restoration projects by conservation

partners nationwide that are proving to have a tremendous impact for a variety of wildlife species.

We urge Congress to support this important legislation and help preserve, protect and enhance the health of our national forests for years to come.

Mike Butler  
CEO  
Tennessee Wildlife Federation