

Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, Forestry Committee

Legislative Hearing to Review H.R. 471, the Fix Our Forests Act, and Options to Reduce Catastrophic Wildfire

6 March 2025

Overview: The discussion centered around the [Fix Our Forests Act](#), which aims to improve wildfire management through streamlined processes and proactive measures.

Witnesses:

- [Tim Vredenburg](#), Director of the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians Department of Forest Management
- [Jonathan Houck](#), County commissioner in the Gunnison County, Colo. Board of County Commissioners
- [Frank R. Beum](#), Member of the National Association of Forest Service Retirees Board of Directors and retired regional forester for the Rocky Mountain Region
- [Robert Gordan](#), Senior vice president for policy, research and international at the American Property Casualty Insurance Association
- [Matt Weiner](#), CEO of Megafire Action

Opening statements:

Tim Vredenburg: Supported the Fix Our Forest Act to address the wildfire crisis and highlighted the impact of wildfires on Tribal lands and the importance of forest management and Tribal involvement.

Questions and Answers:

The discussion centered around the **Fix Our Forests Act**, which aims to improve wildfire management through streamlined processes and proactive measures. Key points include:

- **Tim Vredenburg:** Challenges faced by the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe in managing fire risks and the need for larger categorical exclusions.
 - Tim Vredenburg highlighted the challenges faced by the Cow Creek Umpqua Tribe in managing fire risks on their reservation. He explained that larger categorical exclusions are essential for effectively treating large areas of Tribal land. Currently, they have to piece together small exclusions, which is inefficient and limits their ability to protect their lands. Larger exclusions would allow the Tribe to address fire risks more comprehensively and quickly, ensuring better protection for their reservation while still maintaining proper environmental reviews.
- **Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN):** Importance of federal funding, community input, and proper staffing for wildfire mitigation.
 - Senator Amy Klobuchar discussed the importance of the Fix Our Forests Act and the need for federal funding to support wildfire mitigation projects. She highlighted the

disruption caused by funding freezes and emphasized the necessity of community input and proper staffing for effective wildfire management.

- **Jonathan Houck:** Praise for the Good Neighbor Authority and the need for funding and workforce capacity.