

June 11, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources
1324-A Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John Curtis
United States Senate
502 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Westerman and Chairman Curtis:

On behalf of the National Water Resources Association (NWRA), I am writing to express our strong support for the *Fix Our Forests Act* (H.R. 471 / S. 1462). We applaud your leadership in advancing this important bipartisan legislation that addresses forest health, reduces wildfire risk, and safeguards critical water resources across the country.

The NWRA is a nonprofit federation of state water resources associations, regional associations, agriculture and municipal water agencies, and industrial water groups. Our members provide water and hydropower to approximately 50 million individuals, families, agricultural producers, and other industries that support our communities large and small, our economy and our environment.

NWRA strongly supports a comprehensive approach to forest and watershed health—from prevention to post-fire mitigation. Catastrophic wildfires are becoming more frequent, intense, and destructive, often burning outside of historical norms. These fires do more than damage forests and threaten communities—they also impair water quality, increase sedimentation, and place major burdens on downstream infrastructure.

Nearly 90% of the population served by public water systems in the Western U.S. depends on water that originates on federally managed forest lands. When fire removes vegetation and destabilizes soils, runoff from burned areas can overwhelm rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and water treatment facilities. The *Fix Our Forests Act* recognizes this connection and makes meaningful reforms to address these risks through proactive management and recovery strategies.

We are particularly encouraged by the bill's:

- **Designation of Fireshed Management Areas** to focus forest health treatments in the highest-risk regions.
- **Creation of an Interagency Fireshed Center** to coordinate science, data, and planning across jurisdictions.
- **Streamlined environmental reviews** that maintain safeguards while accelerating action on priority projects.

- **Support for Good Neighbor Authority expansion** to allow broader participation from states and local partners.
- **Investment in local and tribal capacity, data tools, and restoration programs** to improve on-the-ground outcomes.

Each of these components advances better watershed protection, reduces long-term fire suppression costs, and improves the resilience of the systems our members rely on to deliver clean, reliable water.

The *Fix Our Forests Act* provides a forward-looking framework that strengthens interagency collaboration and delivers common-sense reforms to improve forest and watershed health. NWRA believes this legislation will provide lasting benefits for our environment, public safety, and water quality and infrastructure. We respectfully urge swift passage of the bill and stand ready to support its implementation.

Thank you again for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Greg Morrison', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Greg Morrison
Executive Vice President
National Water Resources Association