



United States Senate

October 22, 2018

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Perdue:

I write today to request information on Forest Service activities that have been conducted or are planned for the upcoming months in order to reduce wildfire risk. As you know, California has experienced several catastrophic fire seasons over the last several years. Last year, over 1.2 million acres burned in California, destroying thousands of structures and killing 46 people. This year, over 1.5 million acres have already burned, and the season is not yet over. Unfortunately, a year-round fire season is the new normal.

Earlier this year, Congress provided several new forest management tools as part of a wildfire budget fix that was included in the Omnibus appropriations bill (Public Law No: 115-141). While the budget language doesn't take effect until Fiscal Year 2020, the management tools became available immediately. To that end, please provide answers to the following questions regarding the use or planned use of these new authorities in California:

1. How many projects and acres have been approved under the new Categorical Exclusion for hazardous fuels and wildfire resilience projects (Section 202 and Section 203)?
2. How many 20 year stewardship contracts have been approved (Section 207)?
3. How has the new authority to expedite the clearing of trees and brush along utility rights of way been used (Section 211)?

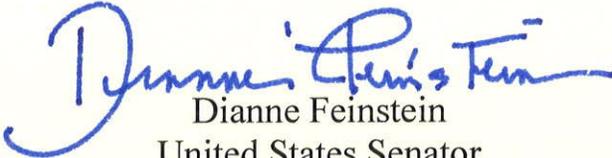
4. Has the authority to allow the use of Good Neighbor Authority for authorized restoration services been used (Section 212)?

More broadly, please answer the following three questions:

1. What is the annual volume of processed timber currently exported from federal land in Region 5? What are the primary overseas markets for processed timber products? Is there demand for unprocessed low-value timber in overseas markets that cannot be met due to the current export ban on unprocessed timber from federal lands in the west?
2. What is the timeline for completion of the wildfire hazard mapping tool and when will outreach to at-risk communities begin (Section 210)?
3. How is the Forest Service collaborating with both the Department of the Interior and utility companies to develop vegetation management plans for rights of way (Section 211)?

Please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this matter further. I look forward to continuing our work to make California's forests healthier and to protect our communities from catastrophic wildfires.

Sincerely,


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/jp