

Farm Bureau Federations

of the Western States

September 15, 2020

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
United States Senate
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Feinstein and Senator Daines:

The undersigned Farm Bureau organizations write to express our support for S. 4431, the Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act of 2020. As evidenced by the over six million acres currently burning in the West, our forests are at extreme risk for reoccurring, catastrophic wildfire. Backlogs in adequate management coupled with drier, hotter conditions, have resulted in unhealthy, overly dense forests. When fires inevitably occur, these conditions result in larger, more catastrophic fires that are difficult to control, destructive to both urban and rural communities and pose great threats to both private property and human life.

Farmers and ranchers across the West are greatly impacted by these reoccurring and catastrophic wildfire events. Farm Bureau members hold public lands grazing permits, own property adjacent to federally managed lands and engage in both public and private land forestry. In addition to direct crop and livestock losses, agricultural commodities are also being impacted via smoke-taint and ash. Wildfire smoke is also exacerbating the public health risk to farmers and farmworkers continuously working to provide a safe food supply to Americans amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Our organizations believe that increasing the pace and scale of forest management activities, including mechanical thinning and controlled burning, reduces the threat of catastrophic fire, protects lives and communities, and helps safeguard Western natural resources and economies. We are also very supportive of the provisions in the bill that would streamline permitting processes for hazardous fuels reduction projects and post-fire recovery efforts.

This bipartisan legislation will expedite forest management, accelerate post-fire restoration and reforestation, and remove hazardous fuel load from our national forests. For this reason, our organizations support the Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act of 2020 as a means to address the West's catastrophic wildfire crisis. If questions about this letter, please contact Erin Huston at (916) 849-3746.

Sincerely,

American Farm Bureau Federation
Alaska Farm Bureau
Arizona Farm Bureau Federation
California Farm Bureau Federation
Colorado Farm Bureau
Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation
Idaho Farm Bureau Federation

Montana Farm Bureau Federation
Nevada Farm Bureau
New Mexico Farm and Livestock Bureau
Oregon Farm Bureau
Utah Farm Bureau Federation
Washington Farm Bureau
Wyoming Farm Bureau Federation

