
November 15, 2019

Senate Interim Committee on Wildfire Prevention and Recovery

Chair Golden and Members of the committee,

My name is Melissa Thompson and I am the owner of Titan Timber Corp., a small logging company based in Eugene. I grew up in a family and community supported almost exclusively on forestry and "Timber Dollars". I know well what healthy, active forest management means to families, communities and welfare of this great state.

WILDFIRE. The word alone invokes both emotional and mental responses in most of us. The imagery that comes to mind is inescapable. Devastation and destruction reign supreme. But why is that? When I was child, you very rarely heard of wildfires that caused catastrophic devastation. Now, its common place. What was the difference 20-30-40 years ago as opposed to today? ACTIVE FOREST MANAGEMENT is the difference. This meant thinning, overstory and understory removals, clear-cuts when warranted, and taking care of the overall health of our forests. It also meant quick and expedient fire response to not just the private, but also state and federal grounds.

When a fire would happen (which it's going to do from time to time given weather conditions, fuel loads, human error and so forth) there were able bodies in the woods... and lots of them. People who could spot, report and respond to fires before they could ever come close to reaching these critical mass episodes of today. As logging and active forest management has decreased; the fuel loads and fire-happy conditions abound.

It is a logger's contract to be actively prepared with firefighting equipment and training in order to have the privilege of working in the woods during every fire season. We work hard to make sure each and every employee knows at any time they can be called upon for fire suppression, and to give them all training to do such. Not only are we prepared to do what's necessary to minimize catastrophe, but in our everyday operations we are proactively helping control and mitigate these potential risks.

A few weeks back, I had the sad experience of viewing the devastation of the Camp Fire near Paradise California. This fire is a prime example of the devastation poor forest management, abundant fuel loads and unfortunate circumstances cause. The longer we allow this to go on, the bigger and more destructive these fires are going to get. We simply can not allow that. The time has come to put boots back in the woods and again support our forest families and communities. The time has come to manage our resource with the wisdom time has given us. The time has come to do our jobs before fire takes away what we all so dearly love. Thank you

