

I support more of this bill than I object to, so I support it - but please read my full input!

Points:

1. These fires were fueled by weather events, worsened by climate change, not caused by lack of forest management. Strong winds and drought brought on these fires; a century of fire suppression and industrial forest management made them severe.
2. Aid should be focused on communities - supporting community resiliency first and foremost, rather than squander time & resources logging land miles away from homes. Effective wildfire preparedness includes making homes more fire resistant, creating defensible space around structures, and creating smoke shelters etc. that support our most vulnerable community members in future wildfire seasons.
3. Forests have always burned and will burn again. Since wildfire is primarily driven by weather, we can expect more wildfire as our climate heats up. The real problem is not that forests burn, but that too many fires are burning in conditions that adversely affect human communities. We can't stop wildfire in forests, but we can keep our communities safe from the flames.
4. The wildfires that swept through the state this year disproportionately impact rural, low income, immigrant, elderly and other marginalized communities. Wildfire policy must center the needs of these vulnerable community members and prioritize protecting these communities from the impacts of future fires.
5. We cannot rely on approaches that seldom worked in the past and no assurance will work in the changing climate. Wildfire policy must be rooted in 21st century science and conditions of today, not business as usual.

Logging is NOT a Wildfire Solution

Thinning/logging forests is not effective at reducing wildfire severity. "Fuels reduction" projects are proposed to reduce fire risks, but the best science suggests that thinning forests far from where people live is ineffective. Rather than invest in this wasteful approach, we should focus on "fuels reduction activities" where it is most effective: directly adjacent to communities, especially within 60-100 feet of structures - not in remote backcountry areas.

Industrial logging actually makes fires worse. Timber plantations and heavily thinned forests are less resilient to climate change and more prone to uncharacteristically severe wildfire. Scientists have found that native, old-growth forests are the most resilient to fire; forests degraded by decades of clearcut logging are more prone to unnaturally severe wildfire.

Focusing on logging misdirects resources from community resiliency. Limited state resources should focus on making our communities more fire-resilient. not to more ineffective and destructive commercial logging in the backcountry.

What Works to Keep Communities Safe:

Fire-wising homes & communities: Research shows that installing fire-resistant roofing, rain gutter guards, and ember proof vents, combined with maintaining "defensible space" within 60-100 ft of homes, are the best ways to protect homes from wildfire. The state should create a financial assistance program to help elderly, disabled, and low income homeowners and renters pay for this critical work

Building smoke shelters: Invest in public smoke shelters and advanced air filtration systems and educate about smoke risks & minimizing exposure.

Firefighters should concentrate their efforts on wildfires that pose direct risks to homes and communities. Conduct more prescribed burns in safe weather and appropriate ecosystems.

Addressing flammable power lines: Downed power lines were a primary source of this year's wildfire ignitions. Power companies can turn off the grid during high wind events & build energy infrastructure underground in urban areas.

Limiting development in fire-prone areas: Strengthen land-use regulations where fire risks are greatest. Like in wetlands, limit the construction of new homes in fire-prone forests and shrublands.