
SUBSTITUTE SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8007

State of Washington

54th Legislature

1995 Regular Session

By Senate Committee on Natural Resources (originally sponsored by Senators Morton, Hargrove, Oke, Winsley and Rasmussen)

Read first time 02/21/95.

1 TO THE HONORABLE BILL CLINTON, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND
2 TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE AND THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF
3 REPRESENTATIVES, AND TO THE SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
4 UNITED STATES, IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
5 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND TO THE SECRETARY OF THE
6 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR:

7 We, your Memorialists, the Senate and House of Representatives of
8 the State of Washington, in legislative session assembled, respectfully
9 represent and petition as follows:

10 WHEREAS, 1994 was the latest in a series of catastrophic forest
11 fire seasons in the West, and 2.9 million acres were burned, including
12 a total of 285,700 acres in Washington state, and the lives of 25
13 courageous fire fighters were lost; and

14 WHEREAS, The burned area contains over 700 million board feet of
15 timber that will lose commercial value within two years, and the prompt
16 salvage logging of fire-damaged and killed trees will permit redemption
17 of some of their commercial value; and

18 WHEREAS, Removal of damaged and dead trees will also reduce the
19 risk of reburns, such as the three fires that occurred over an 18-year
20 period and were sparked by one original fire, the Oregon Tillamook
21 fire, as well as reduce future fire risk by reducing fuel for fires; and

1 WHEREAS, The severity of these fires are the result of prolonged
2 drought and deteriorating forest health conditions, and these
3 conditions still exist over very large areas threatening lives,
4 property, and the jobs of residents of timber-dependent communities;
5 and

6 WHEREAS, Enormous wildfires awaiting ignition on public lands of
7 the West can no longer be seen as uncontrollable acts of nature; and
8 the costs and risks of inaction are greater than the costs of remedial
9 actions; and

10 WHEREAS, Millions of acres of dead and dying trees have been left
11 in the wake of the 1994 fire season, and leaving these areas untreated
12 will only exacerbate the spread of insect infestations and disease and
13 increase the risk of future catastrophic fires; and

14 WHEREAS, Billions of dollars of timber is burned and will have no
15 value if not salvaged quickly, compounding the cost and difficulty of
16 providing long-term solutions; and

17 WHEREAS, Removal of such trees will also help control insects and
18 disease, recycle nutrients into soils, and improve wildlife habitat,
19 stream flows, and grazing areas, thereby creating a more resilient
20 landscape of plants and animals; and

21 WHEREAS, Burned areas should be promptly reseeded to protect
22 against flood, mud, and erosion damage, and trail erosion control
23 structures should be built to further ensure protection against flood,
24 mud, and erosion damage, and trail erosion control structures should be
25 built to further ensure protection against flood, mud, and erosion
26 damage;

27 NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that the
28 President of the United States declare a state of forest health
29 emergency in Eastern Washington and other affected areas; and that the
30 Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior expedite salvage sales of
31 dead and dying trees to mitigate dangerous conditions and improve
32 future forest health in these affected areas. Your Memorialists
33 further pray that the United States Department of Agriculture
34 participate in efforts to ensure the long-term health of our natural
35 resources and request that the United States Department of Agriculture:

36 (1) Conduct salvage logging on all forest lands burned by wildfires
37 in 1994 or before;

38 (2) Take steps to control diseases and insects preying upon damaged
39 and dead trees in burned areas; and

1 (3) Reseed and replant seedlings in burned areas in order to
2 prevent further damage to those areas.

3 BE IT RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately
4 transmitted to the Honorable Bill Clinton, President of the United
5 States, the Secretary of the United States Department of Agriculture,
6 the Secretary of the United States Department of the Interior, the
7 President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of
8 Representatives, and each member of Congress from the state of
9 Washington.

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