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SENATE JOINT MEMORIAL 8002

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State of Washington                      58th Legislature                      2003 Regular Session

By Senators Morton, Hewitt, Sheahan, Stevens, Parlette, Mulliken, Oke and Roach

Read first time 01/15/2003.            Referred to Committee on Natural Resources, Energy & Water.

1            TO THE HONORABLE GEORGE W. BUSH, PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES,  
2            AND 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 HONORABLE ANN M.  
5            VENEMAN, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND TO DALE  
6            BOSWORTH, CHIEF OF THE FOREST SERVICE, AND TO THE HONORABLE GAIL A.  
7            NORTON, SECRETARY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR:

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

11           WHEREAS, Wildfires in forest areas are increasing at an alarming  
12           rate with the 2002 fire season one of the most severe since the 1940s;  
13           and

14           WHEREAS, There are over 180 million acres of public land near  
15           communities with a high risk of fire; and

16           WHEREAS, Forest health both in Washington state and throughout the  
17           nation has been on a steady decline in many forests over the last  
18           thirty years; and

19           WHEREAS, Forest disease, overly dense forests, weeds, and brush and  
20           shrub build-up are increasing problems; and

1           WHEREAS, Federal government agencies can help eliminate the  
2 impending crisis by working closely with local communities to restore  
3 damaged landscapes and appropriately reforest and manage lands near  
4 homes and urban areas;

5           NOW, THEREFORE, Your Memorialists respectfully pray that there be  
6 aggressive, immediate, and continued forest health-related management  
7 activities on all forestland and on all Washington national forests.  
8 Aggressive forest management will enhance and protect the health of  
9 federal, state, and private forestlands. Such efforts will reduce the  
10 effects of catastrophic wildfire that threaten all forest values,  
11 including wildlife, water quality, and recreation opportunities.  
12 Aggressive management will protect communities within and surrounding  
13 the forests.

14           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the United States Forest Service  
15 review the effectiveness of current fire fighting procedures and fire  
16 fighting procedures used in the past, including fire breaks established  
17 before fires and fire lines established during fires, to ensure that  
18 the most effective methods are used; and

19           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we strongly support federal management  
20 activities to reduce the risk of further spreading of insects and  
21 disease to state forestlands and private lands adjacent to federal  
22 lands; and

23           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage the United States Forest  
24 Service to first focus management activities on federal lands adjacent  
25 to private lands to decrease the risk of wildfire on privately owned  
26 timberland, and then request from Congress the authority to use revenue  
27 generated from harvest activities to fund ecosystem restoration and  
28 reforestation activities to benefit fish and wildlife and improve water  
29 quality; and

30           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we encourage the United States Forest  
31 Service to strongly consider current market conditions and the economic  
32 viability of timber sales when choosing harvest methods, encourage  
33 innovative and efficient logging techniques that ensure adequate  
34 protection for fish, wildlife, and water quality, and capture as much  
35 economic value from timber as possible without compromising water  
36 quality or wildlife habitat; and

37           BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That federal, state, and local agencies

1 work together with the public to streamline the processes to jointly  
2 address all forest health issues in order to stem the tide of forest  
3 and grazing land wildfire, disease, and environmental degradation; and

4 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That federal and state agencies work with  
5 all stakeholders to reduce the amount of litigation and appeals that  
6 encumber the efforts to provide policy solutions and to conduct field  
7 operations to improve our nation's public forests; and

8 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That Congress provide adequate funding  
9 levels for the United States Forest Service and continually assess the  
10 progress towards a healthy forest environment;

11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this Memorial be immediately  
12 transmitted to the Honorable George W. Bush, President of the United  
13 States, the Honorable Ann M. Veneman, Secretary of the Department of  
14 Agriculture, Dale Bosworth, Chief of the Forest Service, and the  
15 Honorable Gail A. Norton, Secretary of the Department of the Interior,  
16 the President of the United States Senate, the Speaker of the House of  
17 Representatives, and each member of Congress from the State of  
18 Washington.

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