



ALASKA

May 11, 2006

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NEW MEXICO

NORTH DAKOTA

OREGON

REPUBLIC OF THE
MARSHALL ISLANDS

REPUBLIC OF PALAU

SOUTH DAKOTA

UTAH

WASHINGTON

WYOMING

The Honorable Greg Walden
Chair
Subcommittee on Forests and Forest Health
House Resources Committee
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Walden:

We have been following closely the progression of HR 4200, the Forest Emergency Research and Recovery Act (FERRA), as it moves through your committee, and now understand that the bill is headed for the House floor. We are writing to express our strong belief that active management following a disturbance is the right path for forest management on both federal and non-federal lands across the country.

The Council of Western State Foresters is a unique association of state forestry agencies working to manage forest resources and improve the management of private forest lands across the western U.S. and Pacific Islands. Our membership includes State Foresters in 17 western states and six Pacific Island territories.

As you are surely aware, too often process delays have halted necessary work following catastrophic incidents such as ice storms, wildfire, and wind events. When foresters are able to move quickly to restore watersheds, recreation sites, wildlife habitat, and scenic opportunities valued by the public, they are empowered to be active stewards of the land. Since dead trees lose an estimated 20% of their value per year, moving quickly also provides a much-needed revenue stream to support additional restoration work. Perhaps most importantly, damaged forests can be prone to wildfire; removing dead trees will help to reduce the risk of a second catastrophe on the fragile landscape. We very much appreciate this opportunity to communicate our views, and please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any additional questions.

Sincerely,

David Limtiaco
Chair
Council of Western State Foresters