

**Blattie, Harold**

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**From:** Ryan Yates [RYates@naco.org]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, May 13, 2008 1:33 PM  
**To:** Blattie, Harold  
**Subject:** interim reso

**PUBLIC LANDS STEERING COMMITTEE**

**RESOLUTION ON HAZARDOUS FUELS EMERGENCY**

**Issue:** Current Federal policy allows accumulation of biomass that when not properly harvested creates unhealthy wildfire conditions.

**Adopted policy:** The National Association of Counties calls on Congress to enact legislation granting a Governor authority to declare a crisis when the severity of fire danger from fuels on identified federal lands within that state pose a significant threat to public health and safety, or there would be a probable loss of homes and property if wildfires occur.

Upon the declaration of a crisis, responsible federal agencies would fast-track a mitigation plan to reduce forest fuels. The mitigation planning would be excluded under the NEPA appeal process. Any claimant filing a court action against the plan would be required to post a damage bond of ten (10) percent of the value of the property that would be protected under the mitigation plan.

**Background:** Change in Federal policy regarding harvest of timber from our National Forests has created an unhealthy forest. Many National Forests are clogged with diseased trees that are dead and many lodgepole pines have reached their expected life span and are dying. Overall temperatures are rising in the west and we are experiencing a prolonged drought. Conservative estimates show that perhaps 140 million acres of National Forest timberland in the west is in ecological condition Class 3 or 2: meaning it is ready to burn or soon will be. Much of the west chokes each summer as smoke fills the air and breathing becomes difficult. With the loss of the timber industry, tourism was supposed to save us from economic calamity but with smoke filled skies tourists are not interested in putting their families in unhealthy situations.

**Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact:** Healthy forests, carbon sequestration, air quality, improved local economies, support for innovations in alternative fuels and renewable forest products.

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