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Mr. Deal,

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The American Loggers Council was hosted by the Sierra Cascade Logging Conference and Trinity Lumber in May of 2021 to a six hour, 3-million-acre helicopter tour of the aftermath of the 2019 and 2020 California wildfires. We landed in Paradise, California where 85 people died in the wildfire that destroyed much of the community. After concluding the tour, the participants agreed that it was going to happen again in 2021, and it did. Nothing has changed, and today we have evacuations occurring in Colorado and Texas, and the wildfire season has not even officially started.

Silvicultural “science” has proven what timber stand density per acre should be for healthy forests. Much of the western forests are severely overgrown with 4-5 times the number of stems (trees) per acre. A recent study, that the US Forest Service participated in, acknowledged that a warming climate has extended the wildfire season for obvious reasons. However, the study found that climate change accounts for just 14% of the influence on more destructive wildfires, while noting that live fuel was the largest factor, accounting for 53%. Global wildfire carbon dioxide emissions are at record highs. The Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service of the EU found that burning forests released 1.3 gigatons of carbon dioxide in the month of August 2021 alone. The highest since the organization began measurements in 2003. The U.S. was a leading contributor. Scientists are concerned that areas with dense vegetation -including many of our National Forests - are becoming a source rather than a sink of greenhouse gases.

The medical field has a term, “skillful neglect”, to describe a process of observing a medical situation but not taking any action. The US Forest Service has practiced skillful neglect regarding much of their forest management and wildfire response.

Recent statements from the U.S. Forest Service have indicated that they are changing their observation strategy and adopting a more aggressive wildfire suppression response. U.S. Forest Service Chief Randy Moore has a thorough understanding of the issue and threat and has initiated this new approach. However, this is a policy change that could very easily be abandoned with changing leadership. Therefore, the American Loggers Council fully endorses Congressman McClintock and Congressman LaMalfa’s legislation, HR 6903, that legislatively requires an aggressive and immediate response effort to suppress wildfires.

Sincerely,

Scott Dane

Executive Director

American Loggers Council