

DOC HASTINGS, WA  
CHAIRMAN  
DON YOUNG, AK  
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TN  
LOUIE GOHMERT, TX  
ROB BISHOP, UT  
DOUG LAMBORN, CO  
ROBERT J. WITTMAN, VA  
PAUL C. BROUN, GA  
JOHN FLEMING, LA  
MIKE COFFMAN, CO  
TOM McCLINTOCK, CA  
GLENN THOMPSON, PA  
JEFF DENHAM, CA  
DAN BENISHEK, MI  
DAVID RIVERA, FL  
JEFF DUNCAN, SC  
SCOTT R. TIPTON, CO  
PAUL A. GOSAR, AZ  
RAÚL R. LABRADOR, ID  
KRISTI L. NOEM, SD  
STEVE SOUTHERLAND II, FL  
BILL FLORES, TX  
ANDY HARRIS, MD  
JEFFREY M. LANDRY, LA  
JON RUNYAN, NJ  
BILL JOHNSON, OH  
MARK AMODEI, NV

TODD YOUNG  
CHIEF OF STAFF

**U.S. House of Representatives**  
**Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

EDWARD J. MARKEY, MA  
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER  
DALE E. KILDEE, MI  
PETER A. DEFAZIO, OR  
ENI F.H. FALLEOMAVAEGA, AS  
FRANK PALLONE, JR., NJ  
GRACE F. NAPOLITANO, CA  
RUSH D. HOLT, NJ  
RAÚL M. GRIJALVA, AZ  
MADELEINE Z. BORDALLO, GU  
JIM COSTA, CA  
DAN BOREN, OK  
GREGORIO KILILI CAMACHO SABLÁN, CNMI  
MARTIN HEINRICH, NM  
BEN RAY LUJÁN, NM  
JOHN P. SARBANES, MD  
BETTY SUTTON, OH  
NIKI TSONGAS, MA  
PEDRO R. PIERLUISI, PR  
JOHN GARAMENDI, CA  
COLLEEN W. HANABUSA, HI  
PAUL TONKO, NY

JEFFREY DUNCAN  
DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

**Opening Statement of**  
**Chairman Doc Hastings**  
**House Committee on Natural Resources**  
**Subcommittee on Public Lands and Environmental Regulation Oversight Hearing on**  
**“State Forest Management: A Model for Promoting Healthy Forests, Rural Schools &**  
**Jobs”**  
**Tuesday, February 26, 2013 at 10:00 am**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for holding this hearing to identify ways on how the federal land agencies can improve their management policies to benefit not only the health of our national forests, but also, to spur more jobs and economic development for rural communities and schools that depend on the forests.

Today’s hearing focuses on case examples of states that have successfully managed state-owned forestlands for generations to benefit a variety of public uses. Not surprisingly, many such examples exist nationwide.

Many of these states, despite holding title to only a fraction of the land within their boundaries as the federal government, are often able to produce more revenue, create more jobs and result in better managed forests. In stark contrast, the federal government’s poor forest management results in an ever-increasing overgrowth and disease infestation of our forests, destruction of habitat, maintenance backlogs, and a proliferation of catastrophic wildfires.

At a Longview, Washington field hearing this subcommittee held last May, one witness representing a timber company that does business in both California and Washington, provided a simple, yet powerful, example of this juxtaposition. He told of how his company made a decision to establish operations in Washington because of the certainty of timber from public lands, but quickly clarified that he was referring to the *state forest trust lands*, rather than the Forest Service’s.

I want to thank Governor Otter, a distinguished alumnus of this Committee, for his willingness to come and testify this morning. With over 300 million board feet of timber harvested generating over \$50 million in receipts last year on Idaho state forestlands, Governor Otter knows firsthand how states are providing leadership on how to improve forest management, and I look forward to hearing his testimony.

I also welcome Lewis County Commissioner Lee Grose, who serves as a Member of the Washington State Board of Natural Resources, which, as set by the state's constitution, manages 2.2 million acres of state-owned trust forestlands. These lands, generating an average of \$168 million annually, support construction of public elementary, middle school and high schools statewide, facilities at the state's universities, and other state facilities and institutions.

In comparison, the U.S. Forest Service is responsible for managing over 9 million acres of forest land contained within seven different national forests in the State of Washington, yet harvests just 2 percent of the new growth, yielding a four-year average of only \$589,000 in revenue.

Nationwide, the Forest Service last year harvested 200,000 acres—or a meager one-tenth of one percent of the total forested acreage in the national forest system. That's less than the total acreage of forestlands that *burned* in eastern Washington wildfires last fall, ironically including more than 35,000 acres of endangered spotted owl habitat.

Rather than offering all-too-familiar rhetoric of how complying with one federal law or another “costs too much,” it's time for the federal government to adjust how it does business, and honor its own statutory responsibilities to manage the forests, including allowing sufficient timber harvests, that benefit forested counties and their schools, as well as improve declining forest health and reduce the threat and soaring costs of catastrophic wildfire.

In 2011, a high-level Obama Administration Forest Service official, testifying before this subcommittee, promised to explain the Forest Service's efforts to streamline the NEPA process to expedite timber management. Disturbingly, two years later, no such plan has been brought forward. Nevertheless, this subcommittee will provide necessary oversight of NEPA's impact on forest management in this Congress.

Finally, during the last Congress, I introduced legislation to restore active management of our national forests to provide a stable revenue stream for counties and schools and create new jobs. Other efforts seek to address the 2.5 million acres of Bureau of Land Management-owned forest lands in western Oregon known as the “O&C” lands.

In coming weeks, I look forward to working with you, Mr. Chairman, and others on this Committee to again move legislation that takes a lesson from what we know and we'll hear today is working in the states—harvesting timber, increasing revenues for public needs, and manage forests in an environmentally sustainable and proactive way.