

H.R. 1873: “Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act”

H.R. 1873, the “Electricity Reliability and Forest Protection Act,” introduced by Reps. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA) and Kurt Schrader (D-OR), provides streamlined processes for the removal of hazardous vegetative overgrowth within or adjacent to electricity infrastructure on federal lands. Originally cosponsored by Reps. Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Jim Costa (D-CA), Liz Cheney (R-WY), Tom O’Halloran (D-AZ) and an additional group of 14 bipartisan Members, the bill reduces the threat of wildfires and improves the safety and reliability of the Nation’s electric grid.

The Problem:

- Proper management of vegetation near electric infrastructure within or adjacent to rights-of-way on federal lands is important to ensure electric grid reliability and prevent wildfires. If trees and vegetative growth are not properly maintained, they could result in damaging and costly power outages and forest fires.
- Electric utility companies are responsible for clearing potentially damaging overgrowth. However, federal red tape and bureaucratic permitting delays are impeding adequate and timely management, negatively impacting the environment, American consumers and energy reliability.

The Solution:

- H.R. 1873 would require expedited federal review processes for trees that are dangerously close to power lines.
- H.R. 1873 promotes consistency between federal agencies, timely decision-making and accountability for excessive delays.

Benefits:

- H.R. 1873 reduces the likelihood of catastrophic wildfires, prevents costly electricity blackouts and strengthens electric grid reliability.
- H.R. 1873 safeguards electricity infrastructure and wildlife habitat on federal lands.
- H.R. 1873 lowers costs for utilities and ratepayers.

Endorsements:

- The bipartisan bill has been endorsed by the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association, the American Public Power Association, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Edison Electric Institute, the Northwest Public Power Association, the Southern California Public Power Association, the Colorado River Energy Distributors Association and the Large Public Power Council.

