

Once Reintroduced, Support the Bipartisan *Environmental and Economic Benefits Restoration Act*



ABOUT NASF

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) is composed of the directors of state and territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia.

NASF represents State and Territorial Forester interests by influencing forest policy and leading efforts to optimize social, economic, and environmental benefits of trees and forests.

Learn more at www.stateforesters.org

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National priority Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) projects are a key means for states, in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service and other partners, to address critical forest priorities across the landscape.

LSR projects focus only on the most critical priorities identified in each state's Forest Action Plan and on achieving national goals as laid out in the State and Private Forestry national themes. As a result, LSR contributes to achieving results across the landscape and to making meaningful local, regional, and national impacts.

We ask that you support *the Environmental and Economic Benefits Restoration Act*, once reintroduced, to focus and coordinate state and federal efforts on the nation's most critical forestry challenges.

The Landscape Scale Restoration (LSR) Program was created to enhance the on-the-ground outcomes delivered through the USDA Forest Service's Cooperative Forestry Programs. The *Environmental and Economic Benefits Restoration Act* codifies the LSR program and adds a requirement that the state Forest Action Plans be the basis for project selection. Collectively these Forest Action Plans are the plan for America's forests across all boundaries.

Senator Steve Daines (R-MT) and Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) introduced S. 3310 in September 2016. This bill would prioritize funding for the highest priority projects, resulting in measurable improvements to non-federal private forests and adjoining National Forest System lands.

In addition, the bill focuses a portion of the USDA Forest Service Hazardous Fuels program resources on cross-boundary work which includes thinning trees and using prescribed burns around communities in order to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire. Together with the Forest Service, State Foresters would select those projects and be able to spend a portion of that funding on fuels reduction on adjoining state, county and private lands.

The Environmental and Economic Benefits Restoration Act would:

- Direct resources toward the highest priority forestry projects as identified each state forestry agency's Forest Action Plan. Forest Action Plans reflect national priorities and objectives for state and private forests.
- Direct the USDA Forest Service and the Department of the Interior to spend a portion of the hazardous fuels reduction program resources on projects that include work across public and private lands;
- Authorize a new USDA Forest Service program which codifies an existing approach the agency is pursuing to support landscape restoration;
- Bolster the use of the Farm Bill's Good Neighbor Authority; and much more.

Forest threats including catastrophic wildfire, invasive insects and disease know no boundaries. That is why landscape-scale, cross-boundary forest management projects are so critical to protect the nation's forests and communities.

We encourage members of Congress to work together to pass this legislation this year.