103D CONGRESS 2D SESSION

H. R. 5097

To require the identification of certain high-fire-risk Federal forest lands in the State of Nevada, the clearing of forest fuels in such areas, and the submission of a fire prevention plan and budget.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 23, 1994

Mrs. Vucanovich introduced the following bill; which was referred jointly to the Committees on Natural Resources and Agriculture

A BILL

To require the identification of certain high-fire-risk Federal forest lands in the State of Nevada, the clearing of forest fuels in such areas, and the submission of a fire prevention plan and budget.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Nevada Forest Protec-
- 5 tion Act".
- 6 SEC. 2. CONGRESSIONAL FINDINGS.
- 7 The Congress finds that—

- (1) persistent drought and large areas of accumulated fuels in forest lands have caused the 1994 wildfire season to be one of the most severe in history;
 - (2) an extreme wildfire danger exists in many of the forest lands in Nevada, including such lands in the Lake Tahoe area, which have suffered years of drought and insect infestation that have resulted in a forest that is overloaded with fuels;
 - (3) over 780 wildfires have occurred throughout the State of Nevada in the 1994 wildfire season and have involved more than 215,000 acres, including areas near Caliente, Hallelujah Junction, Panaca, Lone Mountain, Bull Run, Mahogany Springs, Holbrook Junction, and Verdi;
 - (4) the risk of intense wildfires that pose a serious threat to the health of forest lands and watersheds can be significantly reduced by the reduction of excessive fuel accumulations, including slash piles and dead trees that become fuel ladders;
 - (5) the highest priority for fuel removal should be placed on areas where the population is greatest and the interface between urban and wild land creates a great fire threat to persons and property; and

1 (6) timber sales and fuels reduction projects 2 should result in major decreases in fuel loading and 3 emphasis should be placed on handpiling and burn-4 ing as well as the removal or burning of 5 nonmerchantable, smaller, dead trees that are likely 6 to become fuel ladders.

SEC. 3. IDENTIFICATION OF RISK AREAS AND CLEARING OF

- 8 FUELS.
- 9 The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior shall, 10 in cooperation with appropriate State and local agencies—
- 11 (1) identify any area in the State of Nevada,
 12 within forest lands under the respective jurisdictions
 13 of the Secretaries, that is extremely vulnerable to
 14 wildfire due to the accumulation of forest fuels and
 15 a combination of fire history, extent of human settle16 ment, weather patterns, topography, accessibility,
 17 and visitor intensity; and
- 18 (2) take action to reduce excessive accumula-19 tions of fuel, including slash piles and dead trees 20 that become fuel ladders, in such areas.

21 SEC. 4. FIRE PLAN AND BUDGET.

The Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior shall jointly prepare, in consultation and coordination with other Federal agencies and the State of Nevada, a strategic plan regarding fire prevention for forest lands in the

- 1 State of Nevada under the respective jurisdictions of the
- 2 Secretaries and an annual budget for the plan. The Sec-
- 3 retaries shall submit the plan and budget to the Congress
- 4 not later than March 1, 1995, for inclusion in the 1996
- 5 appropriations request.
- 6 SEC. 5. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.
- 7 There are authorized to be appropriated such sums
- 8 as may be necessary to carry out this Act.

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