

are burning and impacted by drought, such as Montana, have the resources they need to protect our citizens, our economy, and our way of life.

As Congress works to get resources to the folks devastated by Harvey, I hope we can all take a page out of the American people's book and work together to get resources not only to the folks devastated by Harvey but the folks in Montana and the folks across the West who have been impacted so greatly by drought and wildfires.

I am asking for each and every one of the folks who serve in this body to look at the photos and stand with the people of Montana as they fight for blue skies and fresh air once again. We need the resources. We do not need a delay. We need to send them quickly because lives and property and a thriving outdoor economy are at risk.

In the meantime, I ask for your prayers for all of the folks who have been impacted by disasters, including the folks from the Treasure State, as we endure the drought and these terrible fires.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECESS

Mr. FLAKE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate stand in recess as under the previous order.

There being no objection, the Senate, at 12:18 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Acting President pro tempore.

EXTENSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that morning business be extended until 3 p.m., with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ORDER FOR RECESS

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that at 3 p.m. today, the Senate recess until 4:15 p.m. to allow for the all-Senators briefing.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

MONTANA WILDFIRES

Mr. DAINES. Mr. President, I left Montana yesterday morning to come

back to Washington, DC, to do the work of the American people but, as always, my heart remains in Big Sky Country. That is especially true right now as fires burn across our State. In fact, just yesterday, of the top 30 wildfires in the Nation, 28 of those 30 wildfires were in Montana.

Our crisis in Montana isn't water. It is not too much water. It is not hurricanes. It is fire. It is smoke filling the air and filling our lungs. It is communities being evacuated, Montanans standing on the side of the road looking at the fires moving toward their homes. We have seen the loss of homes and many structures. Montanans are looking at the tons of fuel just lying on the forest floor waiting for a spark to ignite. In fact, in this year alone, over 1,600 fires have burned nearly 1 million acres in Montana. That is nearly the size of the entire State of Delaware.

At my invitation, Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke both came to Montana, just about 2 weeks ago—in fact, 2 weeks ago tomorrow—so they could see firsthand the impact wildfires are having on our great State. We went out and saw the Lolo Peak Fire. The impact is devastating.

We need to be sure Montana gets the resources it needs, first of all, to stop the fires. I am very grateful to the men and women who are risking their lives to fight these fires, going on virtually very little sleep, living in tents, fighting these fires. The firefighters battling on the ground are away from their families, and they are giving everything to protect our lives, our lands, and our property. Tragically, already in Montana, two firefighters have lost their lives—Trenton Johnson, age 19, and Brent Witham, age 29.

Preventing wildfires is impossible, but we can do much more to lessen the severity and impact of these fires. Seven million federally controlled acres in Montana are at high risk for wildfire. Five million acres—five million acres—have been designated for accelerated forest management due to insect infestation. We are talking about dead trees. Yet, since 1990, our State of Montana has lost over 40 percent of its forestry workforce and two-thirds of its mills. The remaining mills that we have are not running around the clock, multiple shifts, which they could do, except for the fact they can't get enough logs. We are literally bringing in logs from out of State and even out of the country to our mills in Montana to keep them going.

Let's talk about Mineral County, MT. Mineral County was founded in 1914. This county in Western Montana is well known for its dense forests and abundant natural resources. The first sawmill came to this area around the turn of the 20th century. Multiple others followed suit. For decades, the timber industry thrived. Montanans worked hard, and they earned good money in the timber industry. In fact, the timber industry produced tax reve-

nues to support their schools, teachers, infrastructure, and allow our counties to prosper, but in the early 1990s things changed. Across the State of Montana, environmental lawsuits became a barrier to timber contracts that were awarded to Montana's small businesses. A community that once thrived on the abundant resources surrounding them now sits with one of the highest unemployment rates in the State.

Today, Mineral County has just a single lumber mill. Folks living there today are watching the very resources that supported their grandparents burn. In fact, in Mineral County alone, over 25,000 acres have been torched this fire season, and the fires continue to burn. The weather outlook for September continues with above normal temperatures and below normal precipitation. This fire season is not over. We are going to be in it for quite some time.

The mismanagement of our Federal forests and radical environmentalists have prevented hard-working Montanans from having jobs, and this just adds more fuel, literally, to these wildfires. Our inability to act and treat these acres further deteriorates the health of our forests and the communities that desperately depend on them.

I can tell my colleagues—and I can speak on behalf of all of Montana—that we are tired of being told that others know better than we do when we watch our forests burn every summer, our mills close, our neighbors lose jobs, and our counties lay off road crews because they don't have the funds anymore to support basic infrastructure, and our communities suffer from the lack of management of our Federal lands.

A safe forest, a vibrant forest is a managed forest. A healthy forest is a managed forest, and timber jobs are good jobs. A properly managed forest is also good for wildlife habitat. We have teamed with the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation. Their headquarters are in Missoula, MT. If you want to see more elk, if you want to see more wildlife, you need to manage the forests. It is good for wildlife habitat and good for water quality. A wildfire is devastating to the watershed because what happens is the wildfires come through, they wipe out the trees and grasses, and then when the spring rains come—when the snow melt comes from the spring—we see tremendous erosion and devastation of fish habitat and the loss of good sources of water for our communities.

Let's talk about the unspeakable amount of carbon emissions that are produced by these wildfires. I can tell my colleagues that we are done listening to radical environmentalists when they tell us otherwise. Too many forest management projects have been held up in frivolous litigation at the expense of the people of Montana. One such project—the Stonewall project—was halted because of the terrible Cottonwood decision, which is the 21st