

So a declaration act and the Smoke-Ready Communities Act but also action to help field workers. Think about the field workers—the agriculture workers working right now harvesting, and they are in that smoke—500 parts per million small particles damaging their lungs. We need to be set up to help the agricultural community. They are truly frontline workers whose health shouldn't be compromised in that manner.

And we need to make our forests more resistant to fires. Now, I know President Trump has said that is the whole key, and why can't Oregon and California get their act together. Well, let me point out that the majority of the forest we are talking about, those are Federal forests. It is Federal forest. It is Federal management that is so missing.

What I proposed in the Wildfire-Resilient Communities Act is that we spend \$1 billion. It should be \$1 billion dollars a year thinning these overgrown second-growth forests. What do you get out of that? You get jobs; you get saw logs for our mills, and you get a forest that is much more resistant to fire.

It isn't just the thinning. Then it is what they call the mowing to reduce the shrubs that have built up, and then it is the prescribed burn that goes back 2 or 3 years later. This is to avoid the pattern of the fire in the past we had which was to burn the shrubbery on the floor which grows back quickly and prevents that over-dense forest. So we should do that. We should pass the Wildfire-Resilient Communities Act, put the funding in, and create permanent authorization for our collaboratives.

What is a collaborative? To those outside the forest world, that probably isn't a familiar term. It is where you bring the environmental community and the timber community together, and they develop what they call a prescription for thinning the forest and mowing it and doing a prescribed burn. By working together and having a plan, they stay out of the courts because court paralysis has been a major obstacle. So let's take that collaborative model. Let's build on the success of the collaborative and stewardship agreements, which are very similar, but it takes resources and here has been the challenge.

Every time we seek the resources to do more on the front end to make the forest more fire-resilient, it is blocked by individuals who say: Hey, let's go back to the 1950s clearcuts. My friends, that doesn't work. When you clearcut and replant, you now create a new forest where the trees are too close together and they are all the same height and they are absolutely primed once again for fire. The thinning, the prescribed burns, the mowing, this has a big impact.

I went to a forest outside of Sisters, OR, where these measures have been used, and there was a fire that had

been bearing down on Sisters, OR. And when it met the section of the forest that had been thinned, it stopped because the fuel wasn't there to propagate itself forward, and because of the thinning, the fire crews could get through the forest to the frontline of the fire. So it worked very effectively that way.

Now there are situations of high winds when the forest fire becomes a blow torch. Nothing is going to stop it. But often fires move at a modest pace, and that is where the thinning and mowing and prescribed burns can make a real difference. So I am hoping we can have partnership in that approach.

Some have said: Well, isn't it the environmental laws that prevent us from undertaking this effort? And the answer is no. We have 2.3 million acres in Oregon that have gone through the environmental process. We could do the thinning, mowing, prescribed burns tomorrow if we had the funds to do it.

So jobs, fire resilience, better timber stands, better ecosystem, saw logs to the mill. That is all the win, win, win, win products of this approach.

Colleagues, I know many of you have come to me and said: What can we do? Well, there are really two things. Help us do forest management in the collaborative style, in the stewardship style—in the thinning, prescribed burn, mowing style. Help us do that, and also let's recognize that this situation in Oregon and California and many, many other States isn't simply a freak occurrence of the winds. It is a situation where the forest is drier than it has ever been before. Drier than a kiln-dried 2 by 4. If you have gone to the hardware store to get kiln-dried 2 by 4s, they have been baked to have all the moisture baked out of them. There is less moisture in the forest during these periods of drought and heat than there is in that kiln-dried 2 by 4. They are ready to burn at a second's notice.

So this is the result of the changing dynamic of climate. The forest season has gotten much longer. It is no longer a June through August affair; it is a March through October affair. In California, it is a year-round calendar affair now. If you track this decade over decade, each one is worse. There is a longer fire season with more intensive fires and more acres burned. So that is a more difficult project.

Our Earth is wrapped by the commons of our air, and that air holds now a lot more carbon dioxide and a lot more methane and traps a lot more heat, and it is affecting everything. In Oregon, it isn't just the fires. It is also our snowpack. Our snowpack, decade after decade, is smaller and smaller. Why? Because it is warmer and warmer.

How does that affect things? Well, do you like to fish? If you like to fish, you know that a warmer, smaller stream is bad for the salmon returning; it is bad for the trout. And if you are a farmer, you know that smaller snowpack means less irrigation water and less

water to recharge the groundwater that you use when you don't have enough irrigation water, when you have to pump it out of the ground. So we have big impacts not just with the timber community with the forest burning but also on our ag community and our fishing community. The three pillars of our rural economy are all being substantially affected.

Offshore, it is a warmer Pacific Ocean, and it is a more acidic Pacific Ocean—30 percent more acidic than before we started burning fossil fuels. And people say: What is the connection? Well, those waves take the carbon dioxide in the air and convert it to carbonic acid. There is a 30-percent increase in acidity that is affecting our shellfish reproduction. Worry about that—that shellfish are having a hard time reproducing.

So this isn't an urban issue versus a rural issue. This is not a red issue versus a blue issue. This is the economy, the pillars of America, in farming, fishing, and forests being profoundly affected.

So let's work together to take this on. Yes, improve our forest management. We have altered the forests dramatically with our replantings that grow up at the same height and are too close together, but we can make those same second-growth forests far more resilient, jobs, and saw logs at the same time.

Let's work together to improve the health of the forest, especially around our urban areas, our small towns.

To my colleagues who say this is a moment when we are seeing not just the fires, we are seeing other impacts around the Nation; we are seeing the intense storms in the Midwest; and we are seeing the tropical storms and hurricanes hitting the gulf and never-before-seen storm surges on the East Coast—so we are all in this together. Let's work together to assist the families so powerfully affected. Let's work together to rebuild the communities. Let's work together to fund forest management in a way it has to be funded as a counterpart to the strategy of forest replanting that we have undertaken.

Let's work together to take on the warming planet because it affects everything and not just in Oregon and not just in the United States but across our planet. It is our responsibility. Let's get it done.

Thank you.

ADJOURNMENT UNTIL 9:45 A.M.
TOMORROW

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands adjourned until 9:45 a.m. tomorrow.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 7:56 p.m., adjourned until Thursday, September 17, 2020, at 9:45 a.m.

NOMINATIONS

Executive nominations received by the Senate: