

think so. Let me show an example of thinning a forest.

This poster to my left is Mesa Verde National Park. It is down in the Four Corners of Colorado; and just for some promotional purposes, it is the only place in the Nation one can stand in four States at once. I hope people come and spend a little money in Colorado on tourism. This is Mesa Verde. It may be hard to see, but this area that looks kind of dark gray, that is all burned out. A couple of years ago the superintendent of the Mesa Verde National Park decided they needed to protect antiquities and protect employee housing and the lodge and government buildings up here. They ought to thin, and so they thinned the forest. You know how you can tell where they thinned, to the line of thinning, that is exactly where the fire stopped. The fire did not burn through here. Why? Because it was properly spaced. Why? Because it was much more in its natural setting. It was not a fire-break that was built like you would imagine, something as wide as an interstate highway. It is because this area was thinned. There was not the underbrush and all of the waste on the forest floor. They cleaned this area out.

When the fire started on Mesa Verde, we would have lost lots of history, lots of wonderful artifacts had that park superintendent not thinned this area. This is what happens when you thin. This is good forest management. This is how we ought to manage our forests. By the way, this type of management, this park superintendent's action was not directed to him by the United States Congress. It actually would probably have been opposed by some Members of Congress, what he did. It would probably have been aggressively opposed by the Earth First organization and other radical environmental groups; but this park superintendent, who knows a lot more about that ground and a lot more about a forest and management of these public lands, got to make the decision. He made a good decision. He did not act capriciously or recklessly. Rather, he made a prudent decision.

That is why I am advocating the Healthy Forest Bill. It is time to take the management of our forests and return it to the green hats, the Forest Service people, who I have the highest respect for, our BLM people, our wildlife people, our State forest people. Why am I, from the West, complaining about this? Because in the East, your forests are better managed. Why? They are in private hands. In the East where there is not much government lands, people who own homes understand that there is going to be a big fire if they do not keep the forests clean.

Nobody is suggesting that we clear-cut this area so it does not burn. That is like tearing down your house so it does not catch on fire. We are not suggesting that. Not at all. That is an absurd argument made by some of the more radical organizations.

You will find with interest when you see press releases about thinning of the forests, you will find that several national organizations, including the national Sierra Club, including Earth First and some other radical groups, that in their first paragraph of every press release they issue: one, timber because that has a negative connotation to it; two, clear-cutting because that has an extremely negative connotation to it; three, developers, which has an extremely negative connotation to it.

You can see that they will continue to battle and battle and battle so that the management of our forests is based on emotion instead of having the management of our forests based on science.

My bill is very simple. My bill says run these forests with the right kind of management that is based on science. Let us, to the extent we can, take the emotion out of it. Let us manage these forests in such a way that we again here in the West, and frankly at different spots in the East, that we will not face the kind of devastating forest fires that we saw in the West last year.

Look, just because we are on public lands, that land is owned by the people of the United States Government. It is not just owned by the people of Montana or the people of Colorado or Utah, but the fact is we need to respect the opinions of the people that manage those lands. If one lives in New York State, you should yield to the judgment of the park superintendent at the Mesa Verde Park on which is the best way to manage that because if you live in New York, or South Carolina, you probably do not know a lot about the forest. It is a very arid region out there. That is what we are asking in this bill. We are using a commonsense approach to the management of the forests.

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I would urge all of my colleagues, although a number of them have already signed onto this bill, we have lots and lots of cosponsors from both sides of the aisle, I would urge my colleagues to stand up to the barrage of press releases that are going to come out from the Earth First type organizations about how terrible it is to let the local forest guy manage that forest. Or gal, by the way. I do not intend to discriminate on gender there. I ask that my colleagues stand up to this, that they take and they adopt the approach of management of the forest by science, management of the forest by people that have been educated on the forest and people that have worked in the forest from day to day. If we do that, we will once again return to the forests of this country, of which we now have 190 million acres at high risk. If we allow our Forest Service and our BLM people to manage the area that we have given them the responsibility to manage, if we allow them to manage it, in return we will be the big winners because we

will have healthy forests, we will not have these horrible type of forest fires, we will not have the kind of devastation we have seen on wildlife, we will not have the kind of devastation we have seen to the watersheds, to the water supply system, we will not see the kind of devastation we have seen to the wildlife habitat. It is positive, positive, positive. It is our opportunity to make a change. We should not in the United States Congress be managing the day-to-day operations of a forest out in western Colorado or eastern Utah.

This bill is a good bill. I urge all of my colleagues to join the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. WALDEN), who has put hundreds of hours into this bill. The gentleman from Oregon has actually been one of the top leaders on the House and Senate side on this issue, that they join the gentleman from Oregon, they join myself, they join the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. GOODLATTE), chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, they join the gentleman from California (Mr. POMBO), chairman of the Committee on Resources, in our effort to make these forests manageable by science, manageable by common sense, managed by the people that really understand it.

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#### REPORT ON RESOLUTION PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 1261, WORKFORCE REINVESTMENT AND ADULT EDUCATION ACT OF 2003

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio (during Special Order of Mr. MCINNIS), from the Committee on Rules, submitted a privileged report (Rept. No. 108-92) on the resolution (H. Res. 221) providing for consideration of the bill (H.R. 1261) to enhance the workforce investment system of the Nation by strengthening one-stop career centers, providing for more effective governance arrangements, promoting access to a more comprehensive array of employment, training, and related services, establishing a targeted approach to serving youth, and improving performance accountability, and for other purposes, which was referred to the House Calendar and ordered to be printed.

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#### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

By unanimous consent, leave of absence was granted to:

Ms. CARSON of Indiana (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for today on account of official business in the district.

Mr. TANNER (at the request of Ms. PELOSI) for May 6 on account of touring the tornado damage in Tennessee.

Mr. GARY G. MILLER of California (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today and the balance of the week on account of illness.

Mr. YOUNG of Florida (at the request of Mr. DELAY) for today after 2:00 p.m. on account of awarding the Purple Heart citations to veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom.