

Mr. Chairman, Senators good afternoon, my name is Bill Crapser, I am the State Forester of Wyoming, and would like to speak with you today supporting S.1122, "The Good Neighbor Forestry Act".

Wyoming like many western states is a diverse and special place made up of prairies, foothills, mountains, and lakes. People from all over the world come to Wyoming to enjoy our treasures from Yellowstone, to Devils Tower, to The Flaming Gorge. Much of the western United States water supply originates in our mountains. As you know Wyoming is also a major producer of energy for the nation.

Wyoming has approximately 11.5 million acres of forest land within it's' borders.

- 9.0 million acres of federal lands
 - o 6 million acres US Forest Service
 - o 1.3 million acres BLM
 - o 1.7 million acres NPS
- 2.0 million acres of Private lands
- .50 million acres of State Lands

In the state we currently have over 2 million acres of these forests lands that have been impacted by the Mountain Pine Beetle, the Spruce Beetle, or the Doug Fir Beetle.

At the same time we have seen a huge increase in the number of people and homes in the Wildland interface throughout the state. Currently Wyoming has 260 communities at risk from wildfire.

To deal with these and other issues that exist in the intermingled ownerships, local, state, and federal managers need to develop ways to work in a 'cross-boundary' approach when carrying out fuels mitigation, forest health, and restoration projects in our forests.

I believe that passage of S.1122 will provide an important tool for the federal and state agencies to utilize in meeting these management needs.

Let me use fuels mitigation in the interface as an example. Much of the land in the western United States is in intermingled ownership patterns. With the development of CWPPs, communities have been able to identify areas where fuels treatment work is of high priority them. Local and state efforts have focused in these areas, as have Forest Service and BLM efforts on their side of the line. However, I believe that with the GNA these efforts could be better coordinated and projects carried out much more efficiently. This would allow for the leveraging of limited resources, to complete the most and highest priority work. In simple terms, it would allow us to receive the biggest bang with the taxpayers buck.

The concept of Good Neighbor, cross boundary work is not new. Colorado and Utah have had the authority for several years under a pilot project, and from conversations with my colleagues in those state, have seen good results in carrying out fuels, trail, burning, watershed, and in Colorado even timber sale projects. I think that this success and cooperation should be expanded to states across the western US.

From a State Foresters perspective let me take a few moments to talk about what GNA is and what it is not.

- To me quite simply it is a tool to be used when appropriate to achieve important work on both sides of a property line in the most efficient and cost-effective way possible.
- It is not a ploy by State Foresters to take over the management of the national forests. The federal agency is still responsible for all NEPA, compliance with their plans, and for paying for the project.
- GNA will provide a tool to perform work on federal lands that is mutually beneficial to the federal land managers, the communities, and the state. In my mind this would include watershed, WUI, right-a-way, and other types of projects.
- It is not a way to avoid federal employment laws or regulations. From my conversations with Colorado, each project carried out under the agreement, has its' own task order. The individual Task Order is very clear which federal regulations apply to the project, and the state complies with those regulations in the administration of the project. As with most grants and agreements between federal agencies and states, the state is required to sign a Standard Form 424B "Assurances". This document clearly sets out the expectations the state is required to meet.

In closing let me reiterate, Most my colleagues in the west and I support the implementation of Good neighbor authority, because we truly feel that it will increase the cooperation on the ground between local, state, and federal land management agencies, and will allow us to be better stewards of the natural resources we are charged to protect and manage, while at the time allow us to most effectively put the tax payers dollars on the ground where they can do the most good.