

Josephine County Board of Commissioners

Jim Riddle, Chair Dwight F. Ellis, Vice Chair Jim Raffenburg, Commissioner

December 14, 2005

The Honorable Greg Walden
United States House of Representatives
1404 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-3702

Dear Congressman Walden,

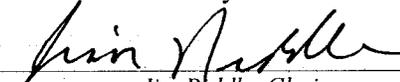
Natural catastrophes impact our nation's treasured forests on a regular basis. Wildfires, tornadoes, ice storms, bug infestation and windstorms are frequent occurrences, which often leave our federal forests dead and in need of recovery and restoration. In fact, as a result of these events, there are now more than one million acres of national forest in need of reforestation – and the number is growing. It is critical to the future of these forests that federal land managers are able to rapidly assess damage, determine environmentally sound action plans and get to work recovering damaged forests. The Josephine County Board of Commissioners supports the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act (HR4200), your bipartisan legislation to help accomplish the goal of recovering catastrophically damaged federal forests.

The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act would provide our federal land managers the tools and resources necessary to complete a swift and thorough evaluation of forest conditions after an ice storm, wildfire or other catastrophic event and allow expeditious plans to recover the health of these lands. It encourages public participation, follows an overwhelmingly bipartisan (and congressionally approved) appeals and litigation process, and requires collaborations with states, local governments, tribes, colleges and universities, and other interested parties. We appreciate your attention to ensuring that the public has the right to participate in the recovery planning process, appeal these plans if they disagree and, if needed, take concerns to the courts. Further, we also commend you for your strict adherence to all environmental laws and specificity prohibiting action in Wilderness areas, National Parks or National Monuments.

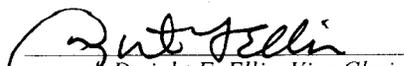
When it comes to the health of our national forests for generations to come, we have a responsibility to get to work restoring lands damaged by catastrophe. The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act would help do just that.

Best Regards,

Board of County Commissioners



Jim Riddle, Chair



Dwight F. Ellis, Vice Chair
BCC/lmc



Jim Raffenburg, Commissioner

COURTHOUSE

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**BEFORE THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR JOSEPHINE
COUNTY
STATE OF OREGON**

In the Matter of Supporting the)
Forest Emergency Recovery and)
Research Act)

RESOLUTION NO. 2005-080

WHEREAS, the number and severity of catastrophic events such as wildfire and windstorm causing severe resource damage on forest and rangelands has increased in recent decades, causing serious adverse environmental, social and economic consequences to both national and local interests; and

WHEREAS, catastrophic events devastate ecosystems, severely compromising their capacity to recover, delaying reestablishment of appropriate forest and plant cover, increasing the susceptibility of the lands to repeated wildfires and invasions of noxious plant species, increasing the frequency and severity of insect infestations and disease outbreaks on adjacent public and private lands, and causing increased erosion and degradation of riparian plant and wildlife habitats and water quality for human consumption; and

WHEREAS, authorities currently available to the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to respond to catastrophic events on lands under their jurisdictions do not provide for timely and effective response activities, with currently required review processes frequently resulting in delays beyond the window of opportunity available for effective recovery plan implementation; and

WHEREAS, the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act ("FERRA") would provide authority for timely and effective responses to catastrophic events, allowing the land management agencies to rapidly respond to the unique characteristics of each event and the particular needs of each locale, allowing for the use of damaged trees and other resources before they lose all economic value, while restoring ecosystems to a naturally functioning state; and

WHEREAS, expedited procedures under FERRA would be limited to catastrophic events over 1,000 acres, providing for prompt evaluation of damage and risk assessments for federal and adjacent non-federal lands, interdisciplinary scientific review, public notice and full participation in the development of recovery plans, and access to speedy appeals and litigation if there are disagreements; and

WHEREAS, increased scientific research on the means and methods for best recovering

ecosystems damaged by catastrophic events is needed, and FERRA provides for such research, including monitoring of restoration projects, partnerships with colleges and universities, and increased emphasis on implementing the results of such research in the formulation of response plans; and

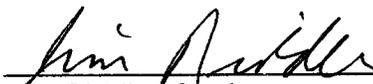
WHEREAS, FERRA provides for involvement of state, local and tribal authorities in evaluating damage from catastrophic events and formulating appropriate response plans, thereby insuring that the interests of local communities and adjacent landowners are heard and considered;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Josephine County Board of Commissioners:

Supports prompt passage of the Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act, with its commitment to timely responses to catastrophic events on federal lands, allowing for rapid restoration of ecosystems, usage of damaged trees before they lose all economic value, protection of adjacent lands from subsequent wildfires, insect infestations and disease outbreaks, and full public notice and participation, including involvement by state, local and tribal authorities in recovery planning and implementation.

DATED this 14 day of December 2005.

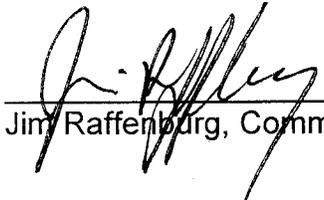
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BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



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