



October 24, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the National Special Districts Coalition (NSDC) and the thousands of special districts across the country, we urge the Senate to consider the House-approved *Fix Our Forests Act* (H.R. 8790) during the post-election legislative session. This bipartisan legislation would provide the necessary tools and resources to improve forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and enhance the resilience of rural and forest-dependent communities.

The Fix Our Forests Act addresses longstanding barriers to effective vegetation management and wildfire prevention. It does so by streamlining forestry project processes, expanding categorical exclusions, and fostering stronger partnerships between federal agencies and local stakeholders. By expediting environmental reviews and enabling more adaptive management practices, the measure would ensure that forest health and wildfire mitigation efforts can respond effectively to the growing threats posed by climate change.

A key feature of this legislation is its recognition of the importance of local input and collaboration. The bill creates meaningful opportunities for special districts to contribute to forest health projects that align with community safety and environmental sustainability goals. By empowering local entities and enhancing coordination with federal partners, the legislation strengthens our collective ability to protect critical infrastructure, safeguard water supplies, and ensure the health and safety of the communities we serve. Additionally, the Act expands the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA) to include special districts, allowing them to collaborate with the U.S. Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management on cross-jurisdictional restoration work. While not all special districts have the same level of capacity, many are well-positioned to participate in GNAs due to their local expertise and existing conservation efforts.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to prioritize consideration of the *Fix Our Forests Act* during the upcoming legislative session. Failing to act now will only compound the risks in future fire seasons, placing additional strain on emergency response systems and endangering lives, property, and ecosystems. If you have any questions or if you need any additional information, please feel free to contact Hasan Sarsour at 202-898-1444 ([hs@paragonlobbying.com](mailto:hs@paragonlobbying.com)).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann A. Terry". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ann Terry  
Chair, National Special Districts Coalition

cc: House Natural Resources Committee Chairman Bruce Westerman  
Congressman Scott Peters