



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
AGRICULTURE
CHAIRMAN GT THOMPSON

Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson
Subcommittee on Forestry Hearing
“A Review of Title VIII: Forestry Stakeholder Perspectives”
Opening Statement
March 08, 2023

Remarks as prepared for delivery:

“Thank you, Chairman LaMalfa and Ranking Member Salinas. I appreciate today’s hearing and the opportunity to hear from this great panel of witnesses.

“Today’s hearing marks the first event of the newly formed Forestry Subcommittee. With the great challenges we have in the National Forest System and forested regions of the country, it’s my hope this subcommittee can shine a brighter spotlight on the needs of the forest sector, especially as we begin the Farm Bill process.

“Since joining the House Committee on Agriculture two Farm Bills ago, I have been proud of this subcommittee and the full committee’s forestry achievements, specifically in supporting the Forest Service, non-federal forest managers, partnership agreements, forest research, and new markets for forest products.

“Still, forested regions have many significant challenges that need to be addressed. For decades, we have witnessed timber harvest decline on national forest lands which undermines forest health, rural jobs and the local economy, and revenue to counties and local public schools.

“We are also facing a nationwide forest health crisis and a wildfire crisis in the West.

“In my district, we continue to have great challenges with invasive insects and plants, and diseases that further undermine forest health.

“In the West, not only are they dealing with serious forest health issues like invasives, but wildfires remain the number one issue, devastating communities and destroying homes, property, and millions of acres of forest land.

“By ramping up forest management, these are very real challenges that we can – and must – aggressively confront.

“Three weeks ago, this Committee held a Farm Bill listening session in Tulare, California. During this trip, I was proud to join Chairman LaMalfa in his district to meet with the regional Forest Service, as well as the local forestry and forest products industry.

“We also toured Paradise, California – which is where the Camp Fire took place in 2018. This devastating wildfire is the most destructive California wildfire on record, it burned the entire town, and took the lives of 85 civilians.

“It was an eye-opening experience to see that firsthand and a reminder of what can happen when we don’t do enough to manage our most at-risk forestlands.

“Unfortunately, this is just one fire; and we’ve seen some of the most difficult fire seasons in recent years. We must get more aggressive with how we treat landscapes, leverage partnerships, and actively reduce the threat of wildfire.

“I am hopeful that as we undertake the writing of the next Farm Bill that we can build on the gains we have made in the 2014 and 2018 laws and consider new ways to help the Forest Service better manage, increase partnerships, and do the restoration work that is badly needed on the tens of millions of acres identified by the agency.

“I look forward to hearing from our witnesses today and hearing what recommendations you have for the upcoming Farm Bill. I’d also like to extend a special welcome to Director Shultzabarger for being here today from Pennsylvania.

“With that, I thank the Chairman and Ranking Member and yield back.”