

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 11, 2025

The Honorable Tom Schultz  
Chief  
United States Forest Service  
1400 Independence Ave., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Schultz:

We write to request information regarding the number of hazardous fuels projects that have completed environmental reviews pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), but have not yet been implemented (also known as “shelf stock”).

Recent reports indicate that the U.S. Forest Service’s (USFS) work to reduce hazardous fuels across the national forest system in Fiscal Year 2025 was down nearly 40% from its previous four-year average. In a letter to Congress on August 6, 2025, you attributed your constrained “capacity to treat additional acres” in part to “significant resource and personnel” needs elsewhere at the agency. Given these issues, and the Trump administration’s reduction of nearly 5,000 USFS staff, we are concerned that the decline in hazardous fuels projects stems from insufficient staffing needed to implement already-approved projects, including for mechanical thinning and prescribed fire.

In order to help us understand why the Trump administration has failed to complete hazardous fuels reduction projects at a pace and scale commensurate with prior years and the clear needs on the ground, we request that you respond to the following inquiries within 30 days:

- Please provide a report that lists each hazardous fuels reduction project for which a final environmental document, record of decision, or determination that a categorical exclusion applies has been completed consistent with the applicable forest plan and that has not commenced as of the date of this request.
  - As part of this report, please provide the approximate number of acres covered by each project;
  - A breakdown of projects based on unit of the National Forest System; and
  - An expected timeline for project implementation.
- If the USFS does not have a nation-wide tracking method for hazardous fuels shelf stock, please explain why the USFS does not track completion of environmental reviews and timelines for project implementation.
- If a nation-wide tracking method does not exist, please provide a shelf stock report for, at a minimum, USFS Region 2 (Rocky Mountain Region), Region 6 (Pacific Northwest Region), and Region 5 (Pacific Southwest Region).
- Please explain any barriers to implementing shelf stock projects and factors that are contributing to delays in implementation.

As you know, the best measures to protect lives and property from wildfire is preparedness – reducing fire risks before a conflagration ignites. We look forward to hearing from you about the hazardous fuels projects ready for implementation and how the USFS plans to implement these projects and speed up efforts to reduce wildfire risk.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

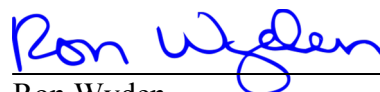
Sincerely,

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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Adam B. Schiff", written over a horizontal line.

Adam B. Schiff  
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Wyden", written over a horizontal line.

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator