August 02, 2022

Randy Moore, Chief

United States Forest Service

1400 Independence Ave., SW

Washington, D.C. 20250

Jennifer Eberlien, Regional Forester

Pacific Southwest Region

1323 Club Drive

Vallejo, CA 94592

**Subject: Hazardous Fuels Funding Priorities**

Dear Chief Moore:

The Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors writes this letter to bring attention to matters that require the Forest Service’s direct and immediate attention. As you are keenly aware, and well versed in, Siskiyou County has been plagued with almost yearly and year-round wildfires that have devastated some of our most vulnerable communities, destroyed forested landscapes, and exhausted available funding and firefighting personnel. While faced with this new reality, we must be focused on post-fire clean up, community recovery, and diligent surveying to identify areas that will require action to reduce hazardous fuels, create fuel breaks to reduce wildfire spread, encourage healthy conifer growth, and strengthen community outreach.

On May 24, 2022, the Forest Service announced that Congress had granted more than $3 billion for hazardous fuels work. We very much appreciate your efforts in securing this funding, and we believe that it can make a huge difference in protecting communities and forests against catastrophic wildfires. We are concerned however that this funding has not resulted in significant on-the-ground action, especially in regards to post-fire clean up and forest management and restoration. There are many projects included on the Klamath National Forest and Shasta Trinity Forest Schedule of Proposed Actions that if fully implemented would serve to meet the intent of the of the $3 billion in hazardous fuels funding. These projects include the Six Rivers Hazardous Fuels and Fire Management Project, Antelope and Tennant Fire Recovery, Happy Camp Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Fire Safety Project, and Region 5 Post-Disturbance Hazardous Tree Management Project, among others. Therefore, through this letter, we are asking that the Congressional funding be specifically focused on achieving the highest priority projects described in the SOPA’s and that the actions in the projects be accomplished to the fullest extent possible to ensure that communities of risk are protected, and to bolster these forested areas against the risk of future catastrophic wildfire.

In September of 2020, Siskiyou County and the Forest Service entered into a Master Stewardship Agreement (MSA) (attached) with the goal of working together to fund, establish, and complete a variety of projects including those related to fuels reduction, habitat restoration, and vegetation management in an effort to restore fire resilience at the landscape scale. The County wishes to uphold this Stewardship Agreement and make all efforts possible to strengthen and protect our forest land, local comminutes, wildlife, and ensure these natural resources are available for future generations. We appreciate your recent dialogue with County Supervisors, as well as other partners, emphasizing the MSA, its benefits, and your desire to expand their utilization. We look forward to action from our local national forests to implement your objectives, and we welcome any discussions about how the County and Forest Service can work together under this MSA to fully accomplish the projects outlined above and detailed in the SOPA’s.

Please contact Elizabeth Nielsen, Deputy County Administrator at enielsen@co.siskiyou.ca.us or (530) 842-8012, if you have any questions or would like to discuss this further. This letter was approved by the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors on August 02, 2022, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

Sincerely,

Brandon A. Criss, Chair

Board of Supervisors

cc: Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest

 Forest Supervisor, Shasta Trinity National Forest

 Honorable Doug LaMalfa