

**Westerman Speech on Adoption of the Rule  
H.R. 2936 – The Resilient Federal Forests Act  
Wednesday, November 1, 2017**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and let me thank the gentleman from Washington State for not only yielding me this time and for his good work on the Rules Committee, but for his support of my bill H.R. 2936 – the Resilient Federal Forests Act.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to speak right now not only as a member of the United States House of Representatives but also as a forester educated at this country's first forestry school, licensed by my home state by exam to practice forestry and if there's an issue that I understand that comes before this Congress, it's our forests. And as I listen to accusations from across the aisle, I trust my colleagues are not intentionally trying to mislead but they seem to know much about that which isn't so. This is a bipartisan bill with Democratic co-sponsors and it's based on sound scientific management.

Mr. Chairman, we are on the floor today to debate a rule and as you know, this rule is part of the process of the House of Representative that will conclude later this afternoon with votes; votes not only on this rule but eventually on the underlying legislation. The process of moving this bill through the House began earlier this year, and as I and a number of members representing multiple committees talked about and debated different ideas and what we hoped for in a final piece of legislation. After hundreds of meetings with stakeholders on all sides of this issue on both sides of the aisle, and countless hours of work by members and staff alike, I believe the House stands ready to vote to improve the condition of our national forest lands. However, the hard work of everyone involved will be for not if the Senate fails to act. For that reason, I encourage our colleagues in the Senate to take up this legislation, debate it, offers solutions, and act to make a difference on our national forests and our rural communities.

Mr. Chairman, let's be clear – our national forests are in the poorest condition this nation has ever seen and will continue to degrade if we fail to act and complete the work that has started here. However, I believe that we have reason to be encouraged. The Senate EPW Committee recent held a hearing on a discussion draft that includes similar forest management provisions as H.R. 2936 and I know that the other committees of jurisdiction are working on forestry reform legislation, as well.

This is not only a forest health issue, it's a public health issues that demands action. Shame on us is we continue to stand idly by and watch our treasured national forests go up in smoke while people suffer and die. I stand here to today to encourage the House to adopt this rule and pass this bill, thereby allowing the United States Senate to take up this legislation or at the very least something similar to it. Pass it and allow us to meet at conference to work out the differences. Let us present a workable solution to the President for his signature. This year, more than 8.8 million acres have burned and an additional 80 million acres are on the verge of spawning more catastrophic wildfires. How many more acres must burn, how many more lives must be lost, and how many more dreams ruined before we come together to address this critical issue? With that I urge adoption of the rule and I yield back.

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