



As we witness the active fires on the Sites Complex and the Mendocino National Forest near Stonyford, wildfires have already consumed over 29,000 acres. Fires are also burning in Trinity County and in other northern California areas. The heavy smoke and inversion layer is a sad reminder of years past and what our communities have endured as the result of Mother Nature, neglect and the failure to appropriately manage the fuel load.



The one bright spot is our firefighters. Rising like the Phoenix, they don their firefighting uniforms and run toward the flames. It is difficult and dangerous work to fight the flames in 12-16 hour shifts, sleep in pup tents in 100+ degree heat, and breathe smoke all day. But it is what they choose to do wholeheartedly to keep us safe and protect our natural resources.

The fires are also a stark reminder that we need to enact policies that can reduce the frequency, duration, intensity and cost of catastrophic fires on public land.

The Forest Service is spending over a billion dollars each year fighting fires. In an era of trillion dollar federal deficits, scarce taxpayer dollars could be better used if we addressed the unhealthy conditions in our national forests to help prevent catastrophic fires in the first place. The bipartisan [Quincy Library Group Pilot Project](#) would do just that, restoring our forests in a fiscally responsible and effective manner. I have introduced H.R. 3685 to reauthorize the program for ten more years, ensuring that the Forest Service has a stable and consistent period for fully implementing the pilot project. At the discretion of the Forest Service, it would also allow for its expansion to all National Forest system lands within parts of California and Nevada. The expansion of the pilot project will enable the Forest Service to use the effective QLG approach in additional forest communities. I'm pleased the House recently [passed this measure](#) as part of comprehensive legislation to promote a more commonsense approach to natural resource utilization.

Additionally, I have introduced the [Catastrophic Wildfire Community Protection Act](#) to allow critical forest thinning projects to go forward in a timely manner and authorize at-risk communities to implement the emergency action plans that they developed to reduce the threat of catastrophic fire. I will continue to work with my fellow House members to build support for this legislation.

In the face of severe economic challenges, we need forest management policies that allow local communities to utilize their natural resources and create jobs, while also restoring the health of our forests.