

**Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
Legislative Hearing
1324 Longworth House Office Building
November 14, 2023
2:00 PM**

- H.R. 4235 (Rep. Kim of CA), *"Wildfire Technology Demonstration, Evaluation, Modernization, and Optimization Act"* or the *"Wildfire Technology DEMO Act"*;
- H.R. 4353 (Rep. Salinas), *"Civilian Conservation Center Enhancement Act of 2023"*;
- H.R. 4717 (Rep. Lamborn), *"Locally Led Restoration Act of 2023"*;
- H.R. 5582 (Rep. Barr), *"White Oak Resilience Act"*;
- **H.R. 5665** (Rep. Stansbury), *"Promoting Accessibility on Federal Lands Act of 2023"*;
- H.R. 6070 (Rep. Amodei), To amend the Military Lands Withdrawal Act of 1999 to clarify the authority of Department of Defense to conduct certain military activities at the Nevada test and training range, and for other purposes; and
- Discussion draft of H.R. ____ (Rep. Westerman), *"Biochar Innovations and Opportunities for Conservation, Health, and Advancements in Research Act"* or the *"BIOCHAR Act"*.

Questions from Rep. Lamborn for The Hon. Dwayne McFall, Commissioner -District 3, Fremont County, CO

1. Mr. McFall, can you talk about forestry in Colorado and across the West in general? What unique challenges do you face? What problems would you like to see fixed? **Forests in Colorado and the West face many challenges. Drought, insect and disease infestation, and lack of proper management over the past three decades have left our wildland-urban interface and watersheds littered with no-value trees, which are fuel for the next mega fire. Thinning of forest to remove fuels will make a healthy forest and watershed. However, our forests in Colorado do not contain the merchantable timber you see in the Pacific Northwest. We need the federal government to partner with the private sector to remove these wildfire fuel sources and create jobs in our communities. H.R. 4717 will help achieve those outcomes.**
2. What makes fulfilling contracts so difficult? **Federal lands agencies have decreased the availability of timber for harvests, which makes private industry increasingly skeptical that federal lands will provide a reliable supply of fiber. This leads to fewer mills being constructed**

near federal lands, which means that timber removed from a federal forest must be hauled a much longer distance, thus reducing profitability for the private sector.

3. What makes western timber unique from timber that you may find on the west coast? Timber in places like Colorado, New Mexico and Arizona is smaller in diameter compared to the Northwest. It is not suitable for larger mills and therefore requires smaller contractors and different equipment within the mills to process it. Additionally, much of the fiber from our forests is best utilized for innovative products, like wood pellets to produce energy.
4. Mills around the country are disappearing and have been in decline since the 90's. What prevents contractors from harvesting enough timber to be financially viable? In addition to the unreliable fiber supply from our federal forests, the ability to acquire a contract and federal agencies' unwillingness to sign a contract for a profitable period of time hinder our ability to grow this sector of our economy. Additionally, for stewardship contracts, there is no room to negotiate—if a contract's terms are not profitable for a company, they may not counter-offer. Private industry knows what works for companies and should have room to work with the federal government in developing contracts.
5. How will the Locally Led Restoration Act help communities like yours? The Locally Led Restoration Act will give contractors the ability to negotiate a contract, kickstarting new forest products industries while cleaning the dead and falling trees from our watersheds. Improving the landscape and allowing new industries to emerge is not only good for forest health but for the economy in rural areas that have been struggling for many years.