



**Written Comment for the Record
On Behalf of the National Association of Counties**

In Support of the “Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025”

**Committee on Natural Resources, Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives**

**April 25, 2025
Washington, D.C.**

Dear Chair Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse and members of the subcommittee,

On behalf of the National Association of Counties (NACo), the only national organization representing the nation's 3,069 county governments, we appreciate the opportunity to submit comments for the record in support of the *Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025*. This legislation makes significant advancements towards restoring our nation's landscapes in the wake of natural disasters that align with county priorities to strengthen cooperation between federal, state, tribal and local governments.

ABOUT AMERICA'S COUNTIES

Counties are foundational to the American system of government. We deliver essential services such as infrastructure development and maintenance, emergency response, environmental stewardship, land use planning and economic development. These responsibilities position counties as key partners for effective land restoration efforts. As the frontline implementers of federal policy, we bring local knowledge and expertise to the table.

RESTORATION OF DAMAGED LANDSCAPES

The *Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025*, introduced by Congresswoman Brittany Pettersen and Congressman Chuck Edwards, includes several elements that we strongly support:

- The Act requires the identification of damaged landscapes that without intervention would remain scarred. Effective planning and coordination will lead to targeted investments in places where funds will have the greatest impact towards bringing back natural order.
- The Act effectively incorporates the place-based knowledge we provide by requiring outreach to local governments and allowing shared stewardship agreements to be created. As local experts, our involvement will ensure these restoration projects meet local needs and maximize project efficiency.
- NACo also supports the broader Fix Our Forests Act, which includes the Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025 as a key provision. Together, these bills recognize the vital role counties play in forest management, disaster recovery and long-term landscape restoration. By emphasizing shared stewardship agreements and requiring outreach to local governments, the legislation ensures that the place-based knowledge and expertise of county leaders inform restoration priorities and project design.



DISASTER IMPACTS ON COUNTIES

We, as local governments, are on the front lines of preparing for, responding to and recovering from natural disasters. Post-disaster recovery and restoration efforts are critical to responsible land management and preparedness for future disasters. Lands heavily damaged by wildfires, insects, hurricanes and other disasters in turn often become more vulnerable to prolonged damage from soil erosion and mudslides. We encourage the development of cooperative forest management and landscape restoration strategies to not only redevelop our landscapes, but to repair damages caused to our communities. This bill effectively addresses key county concerns and obstacles when attempting to recover from unplanned disasters. Through collaborative efforts to identify need and implement restoration strategies, we will be better positioned to redevelop our communities and prepare for future disasters.

LOOKING AHEAD

We appreciate the subcommittee's leadership in advancing this important legislation. NACo fully supports the *Post-Disaster Reforestation and Restoration Act of 2025* and will continue working with Congress to ensure effective implementation of cooperative restoration and recovery efforts.

Thank you for your consideration. We welcome continued opportunities to provide the county perspective on this topic. Please direct any follow-up questions to Zeke Lee, NACo's legislative director for public lands, at zlee@naco.org

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Chase

CEO and Executive Director

