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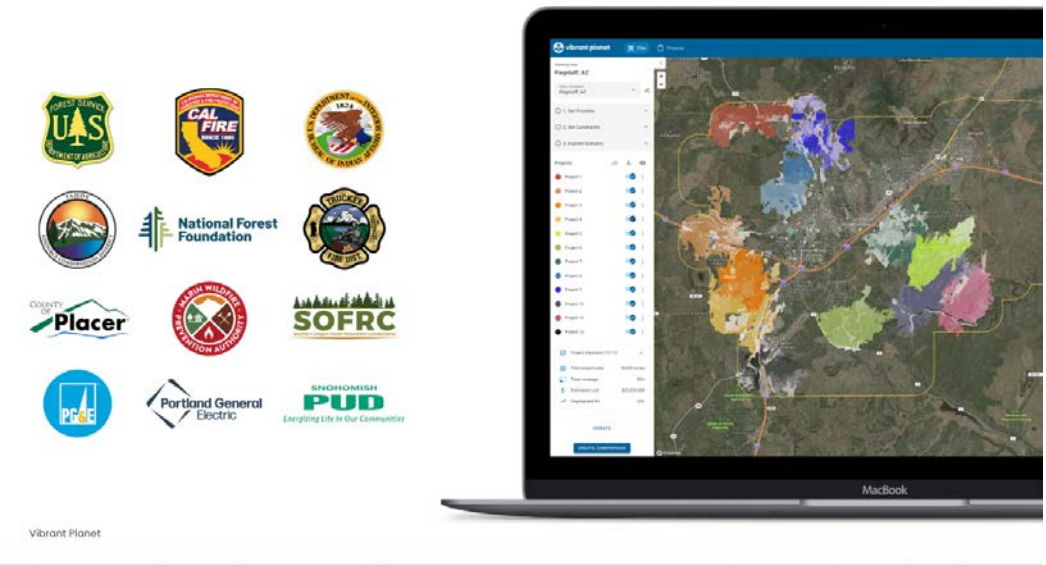
Fix Our Forests: Advancing Innovative Technologies to Improve Forest Management and Prevent Wildfires
June 26th, 2025

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on the critical issue of forest health and the role of technology in transforming the way we manage wildfires on our nation's public lands.

I am Allison Wolff, CEO of Vibrant Planet, a public benefit corporation founded to improve land management and forest health by harnessing modern technology. For two decades, I worked in Silicon Valley, helping companies like Netflix, Google, and Facebook create corporate and product strategies. In 2018, after the devastating Camp Fire destroyed the town of Paradise, California, I felt a deep personal calling to refocus my work. In 2020, I co-founded Vibrant Planet alongside leading scientists, technologists, and land managers to build solutions that meet the scale and urgency of this challenge.

At Vibrant Planet, we've developed a platform that monitors wildlife hazard and risk and supports the rapid development of actionable plans. Our online platform gives local, state, and federal agencies immediate insight into where wildfire mitigation efforts are most needed, down to the tree and house level, and what those efforts will cost. Our goal is to equip land managers with the tools they need to make fast, science-based decisions, and the ability to report actual outcomes.



Fire moves fast, but so do we. We're proud to have our technology in use across 75 million acres in 8 states in the American West. Our clients include the U.S. Forest Service, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the National Forest Foundation, CAL FIRE, Pacific Gas & Electric, Portland General Electric, and a host of counties, collaboratives, and other partners. But while we have proven impact on the ground, scaling nationally requires coordination, funding, and policy alignment that only the federal government can provide. We are prepared to support all of the federal wildfire agencies that come together at the National Interagency Fire Center in Boise, Idaho. Vibrant Planet is uniquely positioned to serve as the connective tissue and common operating platform between these many hardworking teams.

Using our technology, partners can view the landscapes that matter most to them, regardless of how complicated the land ownership patterns are, enabling them to coordinate actions across jurisdictional boundaries with rich, visual information that reduces conflict and litigation, and accelerates decisions and actions. Designed for maximum flexibility, someone can use our tool to run a wildfire risk analysis for the entire state of Utah, and moments later, shift gears to design a 5-year fuels treatment plan near Baker City, Oregon.

Our system stays up to date with current on-the-ground conditions using Lidar, satellite imagery, and advanced AI and machine learning. In essence, we've produced, and keep up-to-date, a "digital twin" of trees and other vegetation, built infrastructure, recreation sites, key water bodies of value, Threatened and Endangered Species nests, among other localized values.

We joined forces in 2023 with Pyrologix, the industry leader in advanced, accurate fire science that makes it possible to understand how fire has moved through a landscape

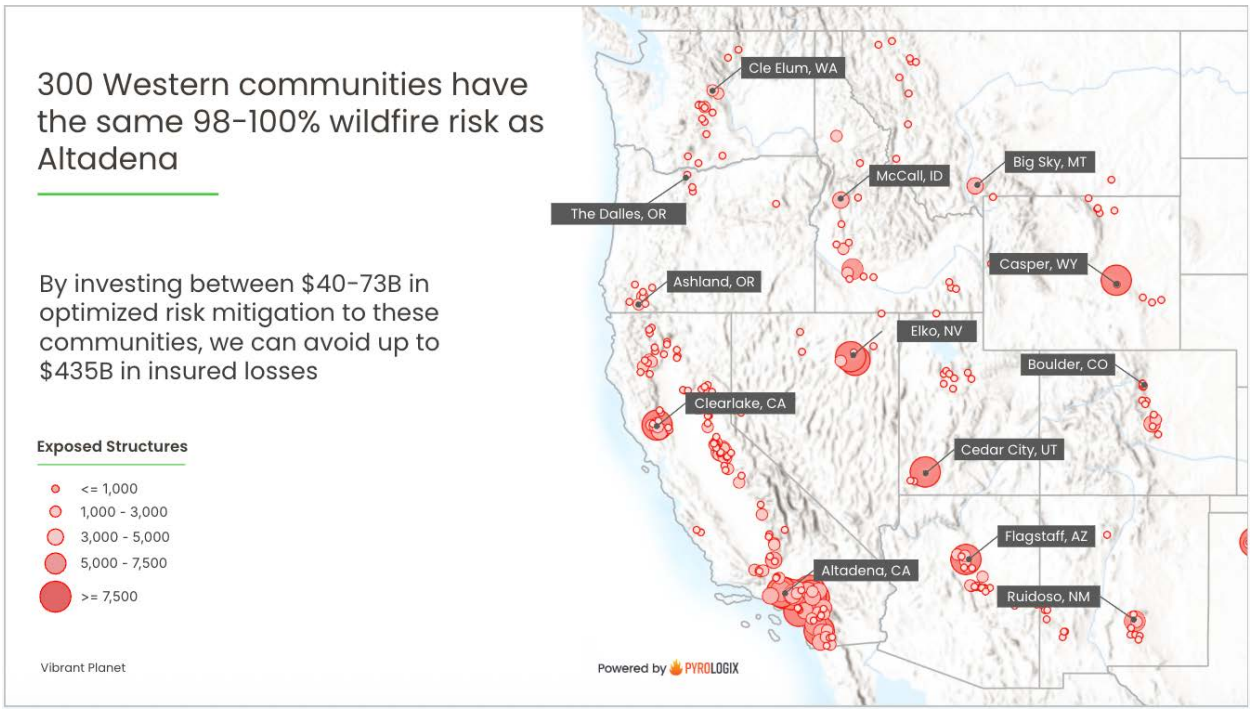
and how future fires might start and spread. With this capability built in, our platform instantly evaluates the costs of actions versus inaction. This means we can give land managers a clear view of the risks and opportunities across our nation's lands, helping them pinpoint areas that need urgent attention with specific treatment plans.

I'll explain this last point by taking us in for a close look at the Eaton Fire that devastated the Los Angeles area in January. Like you, we watched in horror as 19 people lost their lives and thousands lost their homes in Altadena.

At Vibrant Planet, we wanted to understand what the cost of wildfire mitigation treatments would have been in that area and what impact they would have likely had on the fire if they had happened before the fire broke out. We determined that a nine million dollar investment in wildfire risk mitigation work, deployed across key locations near Altadena, would have resulted in tens of billions of dollars in avoided losses.

I want to highlight again how jarring those numbers are. Nine million dollars of wildfire mitigation work could have prevented billions of dollars in property and infrastructure losses.

Importantly, the risk exposure that Altadena faced is not unique. When we used our system to look across the western U.S., we found something staggering: more than 300 communities face wildfire risk just as high as Altadena did before the fire, putting them among the 98-100 percentile of fire probability – for both likelihood of wildfire and number of buildings exposed. Collectively, these 300 areas contain 580,000 structures exposed to danger, with potential insured losses estimated at $435 billion, which is about 1.6 percent of the nation's GDP. Getting ahead of these fires to mitigate the risk is absolutely crucial. That's 1.6% of our nation's GDP. That's not a fringe issue. That's a national security and economic resilience issue.



In the past, the majority of fire-related budgets and resources have been deployed to fire suppression. That work is absolutely critical, and new technology can make it even more precise and impactful. But the truth is, we can no longer suppress our way out of this problem. We have to invest in mitigating risk, which, importantly, makes fire fighting safer and more successful when fire does break out.

That is why we are so pleased to see bipartisan, bicameral work on legislation like the Fix Our Forests Act. Specifically, we see enormous potential in the proposed Fireshed Center, which would require wildfire agencies to use modern technology to guide wildfire mitigation and response. As part of the establishment of the Fireshed Center, relevant wildfire agencies are directed to acquire and use state-of-the-art technologies to ensure that our nation's fire mitigation and firefighting efforts are based on the best available information and deployed in a rapid and dynamic fashion.

Private-sector tools like Vibrant Planet are perfectly positioned to help our wildfire and natural resources agencies make the major leap forward the legislation calls for. We have been tested and are ready to deploy at scale. Together with other firetech innovators, we can ensure that the United States is prioritizing the most at-risk communities, the most ecologically sensitive areas, and the places where fire mitigation will yield the greatest return; both in terms of public safety and taxpayer dollars.

We are confident that our system, deployed on a national scale, would save $180–$240 million annually in taxpayer dollars by accelerating high-priority forest resilience and wildfire mitigation projects.

This represents a 6–8x return on investment and unlocks significant cost savings, including:

- An estimated $800 million to $1.2 billion in savings across 10 years, by cutting down on lawsuits, avoiding project delays, and eliminating repetitive or manual work.
- Agencies could also see a 10–15% boost in efficiency (about $80 million a year) by freeing up staff to focus less on paperwork and more on getting work done in the field.
- The time and cost of planning efforts could be cut by 60%, speeding things up by 3 to 5 years and helping build more trust with local communities.

In sum, we can double the pace of implementation and expand the pipeline of shovel-ready, locally supported projects.

While the potential savings are huge, this isn't just a financial opportunity. This is a real need. Our federal wildland fire teams can't make this leap alone. They need clear support and direction from Congress. The agencies on the frontlines of this work are not forward-leaning when it comes to technology or sourcing solutions from the private sector more generally. This is not meant as criticism. It is a structural reality. Federal agencies are rarely rewarded for innovation or changing the status quo.

But we must surge forward and work together in more transparent and cost-effective ways. The safety of our communities depends on it, and it is exactly the kind of innovation that the Fireshed Center outlined in the Fix Our Forests Act is aiming to deliver.

To support this critical transformation, it is essential that agencies have clear support from Congress to take bold steps. Right now, new leadership is stepping into key positions across multiple wildfire agencies, momentum around creating a national wildland firefighting force is growing, and the nature of wildfire itself is changing. In the face of this much change, clear direction and support from Congress — or the lack thereof — will have long lasting impacts. As agency leaders confront difficult decisions under increasingly constrained budgets, members of Congress can provide both the direction and confidence needed to advance necessary reforms.

One of the most essential steps you can take — that we can take together — is to make best-in-class technologies available to our nation's incredible wildland firefighting teams. Until we do that, we will continue to spend billions of dollars reacting to disasters instead of preventing them.

Wildfires are happening right now, the need is urgent, and technology and science exist to better manage the challenges we face. Every day we delay is a missed opportunity to get ahead of the next life-altering, community-destroying megafire.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.