

STATEMENT OF
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, FOREST SERVICE
BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL LANDS
REGARDING:

H.R. 9999, “MOUNTAIN PINE BEETLE COORDINATION ACT”

SEPTEMBER 16, 2026

Chairman Tiffany, Ranking Member Neguse, and Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for the opportunity to present the views of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) on H.R. 9999, a bill “to authorize the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service, to enter into cooperative agreements with certain entities to address mountain pine beetle infestations and reduce associated wildfire risk, and for other purposes.”

H.R. 9999, the “Mountain Pine Beetle Coordination Act,” would authorize the Forest Service to enter into cooperative agreements with states, other political subdivisions of the state, and Federally recognized tribes, to support the detection, treatment, and mitigation of mountain pine beetle infestations on National Forest System lands, through a variety of activities, including: monitoring and data sharing; planning and implementation of projects; and other activities determined necessary to reduce wildfire risks associated with such infestations.

Additionally, H.R. 9999 would authorize the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service to provide technical assistance with respect to the monitoring and management of mountain pine beetle infestations to the defined entities upon their request.

The U.S. Forest Service’s Western Bark Beetle program addresses multiple species of bark beetles native to the western United States, including the Mountain Pine Beetle. These species are responsible for significant mortality in conifers including pines, spruce, Douglas-fir, and true firs.

The agency’s Forest Health Protection program provides technical and financial support to Federal, State, private, and tribal lands to support prevention, suppression, eradication, and restoration to reduce the ecologic and economic impacts of western bark beetles. Forest Service entomologists can assist with pheromone pesticide use proposals and purchase, and integrating proposed projects with timber, fuels, recreation, or wildlife programs to achieve forest health benefits. Forest Health Protection leverages Forest Inventory and Analysis data on tree species, density, basal area, and mortality to characterize susceptible host resources, support national insect and disease risk assessments, and evaluate changes in forest condition over time.

Forest Health Protection also leverages the annual forest insect and disease survey, National Insect and Disease Risk Map, and wildfire hazard data to inform priority landscapes for Western Bark Beetle funds. Additional data is provided from National Forests and state partners to determine highest priority landscapes for cross-boundary programs and activities. By prioritizing this national strategy, the Forest Service has made significant progress on high-need landscapes,

demonstrating our commitment to proactive forest management to build resilient and productive forests.

While many of the activities proposed in H.R. 9999 may be accomplished through existing authorities, USDA supports efforts to address increasing insect and disease issues facing our National Forests and Grasslands and we would appreciate the opportunity to work with the bill sponsor to ensure the language of the bill aligns with ongoing work.