



**Chair Chellie Pingree**  
**Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies**  
**The U.S. Forest Service's FY22 Budget Request Hearing**  
**April 15, 2021**

*\*As Prepared\**

I'd like to welcome back to the subcommittee the 19<sup>th</sup> Chief of the USDA Forest Service, Vicki Christiansen. We are very excited to have you here and look forward to hearing your thoughts on the fiscal year 2022 budget request for the Forest Service. Joining the Chief today is Andria Weeks, Acting Director of Strategic Planning, Budget, and Accountability.

Our hearing today will address the President's 2022 budget request for the USDA Forest Service. While we do not yet know the full details of the President's budget, I am encouraged by themes highlighted so far, including conservation and climate science.

To this end, the budget includes items such as:

- \$1.7 billion for hazardous fuels and forest resilience projects, an increase of \$476 million over the 2021 enacted level
- Significant investments to encourage private forest conservation; and
- A major increase to USDA's climate hubs

I am confident this budget will change course from the budgets of the last few years which proposed critical shortfalls in research and state and private forestry which play critical roles in maintaining the health of our forests across the nation.

Our forests will play an important part in the fight against climate change and the Forest Service plays a crucial role in ensuring the continued health of those Forests so that they continue to store carbon. One of the keys to maintaining healthy forests is to reduce the amount of high-intensity fires which are affecting our landscapes. I look forward to hearing today how increased investments in preventing these fires are helping and what more needs to be done.

I would now like to yield to our Ranking Member, Mr. Joyce, for his opening remarks.