SALVAGE LOGGING BILLS MEET OPPOSITION

As a result of the devastating wildfires throughout the West in 2013, H.R. 1526 and a number of related bills have been introduced in Congress by logging interests to authorize or require salvage logging of burned federal forest lands. One bill (H.R. 3188), which has now been incorporated as an amendment to H.R. 1526, mandates that salvage timber sales proceed immediately and to completion throughout the 400 square mile area of the Yosemite Rim Fire. The salvaging operation would be conducted notwithstanding any other provision of law and without any administrative or judicial review.

As reported in our Enterprise Record newspaper on November 3 (and in many other papers), a group of more than 200 environmental scientists, headed by Dominick DellaSala of Geos Institute, Ashland Oregon, have sent a group letter to Congress urging defeat of the salvage logging proposals. The scientists say that post-fire habitats are ecological treasures rather than catastrophes and that burned landscape plays a critical role in forest regeneration. Further, they point out that the post fire community is one of the most ecologically important and bio diverse habitat types in western conifer forests.

The good news is that the White House has threatened a veto in the unlikely event that the Senate passes H.R. 1526.

It is fortunate that these salvage logging bills became the subject of public comment and criticism. In the past, many such bills have been buried as riders in budget bills and have escaped critical review.

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