



Greater
Flagstaff
Chamber
of Commerce

July 23, 2014

The Honorable John McCain
241 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator McCain,

The Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce would like to applaud your leadership for sponsoring the bill S. 2593, amending the FLAME Act of 2009.

Arizona has bore witness in the last decade to several wildfires due to overgrown, unmanaged forests. The toll these fires take is nothing short of devastating. Through loss of life, destruction of property, shattered local economies, and the obliteration of our beautiful forests, we have literally watched our state burn to the ground.

While there is no “silver bullet,” especially when the American Southwest is in the midst of the worst drought in a century, there are steps that can be taken to reign in the effects of these wildfires. Fire suppression is of course the most widely used tool in our arsenal, and without the bravery of our hotshot crews who perform the deadly work, we could have today been on a truly irreversible course. We commend you for addressing appropriate funding for fire suppression by requiring the Forest Service and Department of the Interior (DOI) to properly budget for the wildfire season.

But to truly tackle wildfires, we have to effectively implement projects that are dedicated to hazardous fuel reduction. We have to manage our forests and we know that such projects work. Earlier this summer, we watched the San Juan fire near Show Low torch over 7,000 acres of the White Mountain Apache Reservation and the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. That number could have easily been doubled or even tripled if not for the decade-long White Mountain Stewardship Project. We applaud you for requiring in S. 2593 that the Forest Service and DOI dedicate appropriate funding to hazardous fuel reduction.

Thank you, Senator, for your leadership on this issue and for always being a champion for our state. Know that you can call on the Flagstaff community and the Chamber at any time for support in seeing your bill become law.

Sincerely,

Julie M. Pastrick

Julie M. Pastrick
President & CEO
Greater Flagstaff Chamber of Commerce