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Comments: A recent UC Berkeley study highlights the benefits of controlled burning and thinning in maintaining forest health. Controlled burns can help prevent the buildup of excess vegetation, reducing the risk of uncontrollable wildfires. Thinning, the selective removal of certain trees, allows sunlight to reach the forest floor, promoting the growth of diverse plant species and enhancing the overall resilience of the ecosystem.

One of the challenges we face in protecting our forests is the ongoing conflict between Federal and State agencies when it comes to managing and fighting forest fires. The lack of coordination and differing approaches often lead to delays in response time and a failure to address the root causes of wildfires before they escalate. In some cases, fires are allowed to burn out of control before action is taken, resulting in devastating consequences for both the environment and nearby communities. My daughter is a victim of this very thing. In 2014 the King Fire in Northern California burned 97,717 acres. The local fire department walked away saying the fire was "out" and it took off in the night. Over the next several weeks there was infighting between Cal Fire and USFS, meanwhile it burned 80% of her property. The only thing that saved her home was a fire break road that I personally had put in and thinning of the acreage around her home. Fire fighters were able to get their trucks in and out of the property and "Stage" there to save the structures. This is an example of responsible tree thinning.

In some instances, local loggers have reported active fires and offered equipment to put them out. Only to be told by the USFS they will take care of it. Then they get out of control and burn hundreds of thousands of acres. The USFS has thousands of miles of roads they do not maintain and keep open so when fires erupt, they can't get to them in time to stop them from getting out of control.

This in-fighting and delayed response pose a serious threat to our forests and the communities that rely on them. It's crucial for Federal and State agencies to work together seamlessly, pooling their resources and expertise to create comprehensive and effective strategies for fire prevention and management. Another example of blatant in-fighting that has been admitted is the Caldor Fire in 2021 also in Northern California. The USFS has admitted that their original approach was to let it burn in a remote area. But it got way out of control and ultimately this fire burned 221,835 acres (347 square miles) and 1003 Structures! When it reached the outer edges of South Lake Tahoe threatening many million dollar structures the government miraculously got their act together and decided to stop it by working together. This fire burned from August - October, emitting toxic smoke to townspeople and costing taxpayers \$1.2 Billion Dollars.

It is a fact that some Old Growth Timber are in the process of dying, and need to be thinned to let younger trees come up. To identify this, look at the pitch that runs out of the trees and that pitch ultimately escalates fires. Removing said trees is proper forest management, it lets younger trees come up.

These are a few examples. These fires are now costing middle America millions of dollars in Homeowners Insurance. In the state of California alone homeowners are now forced to use the "California Fair Plan" insurance for their structures with a wrap around for personal property. It is not uncommon to see policies at over \$10,000 per year, per household. Some are quoted as high as \$19,000 per year. On average they are at least \$6,000 per year.

Meanwhile we are approx. 3.5 million homes short in this nation. What is wrong with removing dead and dying trees to provide critically needed homes and infrastructure instead of importing wood from Canada and other countries.

In conclusion, it is our responsibility to protect and preserve our forests for future generations. It's imperative for

Federal and State agencies to set aside their differences and work collaboratively to prevent and manage forest fires effectively. By adopting sustainable practices and promoting responsible forest management, including road clearing and logging, we can ensure that our forests thrive and continue to provide essential benefits for the environment, future generations, and all living beings.