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Comments: The "Fix Our Forests Act"-which has already passed the House and will soon be up for vote by the Senate - is framed as expediting forest management activities to mitigate wildfires but contains issues that would undermine important existing protections for forests. Though wildfire risks for people are increasing with climate change and this complex, lengthy bill does provide some steps toward programs that protect communities from wildfire, parts of this bill may open the door for more harm than good. The issues within the version of the bill that has passed the House are:

Allowing the review of project impacts after completion instead of before (as is currently required by the National Environmental Policy Act) and increasing the size of forest areas excluded from important reviews from 3,000 to up to 10,000 acres

Exempting the US Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management from consultation and review of their management plans when new endangered species are listed or critical habitat is defined, required by the Endangered Species Act

Weakening legal accountability when agencies violate environmental laws and regulations, including shortening the window for filing lawsuits to just 120 days

Better approaches are possible and other legislation addressing ways for communities to protect themselves from wildfire, including the Community Protection and Wildfire Resilience Act, can be supported.