

**THANK YOU COMMITTEE CHAIRS, MEMBERS AND STAFF FOR THE INVITATION TO BE WITH YOU TODAY!!!!**

First, some info on the Associated Logging Contractors of Idaho:

We have over 400 logging contractor and wood hauler businesses as members plus another 100 associate member businesses that are suppliers to our members.

We were established in 1966.

We have members in 28 of Idaho's 44 Counties.

We own and operate an affiliated workman's compensation insurance company, an affiliated insurance agency, and, a workplace safety consulting company.

We have been involved in forest land management issues on public and private lands since our founding and are active on the federal level, the state level, and in the judicial arena.

We have a long history of advocating for sound, science based forest management by our professional foresters as carried out by our professional timber harvesters and haulers.

We have participated in discussions, round tables, conferences, studies, and committees over the years on this very issue you've invited us to provide input on today. Again, thank you!

- Perceived benefits and/or concerns relating to the present state of management, control and ownership of public lands held by the federal government in the state of Idaho;

*The committee heard from Dr. Jay O'Laughlin at your August meeting and may be aware of the mountains of data that Dr. O'Laughlin and others at the College of Natural Resources at the University of Idaho have compiled that show the 'forest health' challenges facing our public lands in Idaho.*

*It is clear to us at the ALC that – whatever the reason may be – our federal forest lands are in dire need of active forest management and that lack thereof has left Mother Nature to her own devices which for Idaho is management by fire.*

*We don't believe that wildfire is the best tool to be used and in fact it is severely damaging and has become more catastrophic and unmanageable each year.*

*We have long advocated that the State of Idaho, as demonstrated by our professionals at the Dept. of Lands, are better land managers for our forest lands. We understand that their mission is different and the laws they work under are not as cumbersome as are those that our federal foresters must work with and therein lies the problem.*

*While we believe and know we in Idaho can do better, we also realize that changes to how our federal lands are managed have to come from Washington, D.C. and likely will not come from Boise, Idaho.*

- Perceived benefits and/or concerns should management, control and/or ownership of such public lands be transferred to the state of Idaho;

*Others on this panel today will likely line out this question, but, the ALC's concern would be should some sort of management and/or ownership shift occur, where will the funding come from to be certain that the state of Idaho and its taxpayers are not footing the bill for national priorities and management directives and, will there be funding to assure there is adequate professional staff in place to perform the needed management functions on the ground?*

*If turning over management to the state involves working under NEPA and other regulatory burdens and being included in the relentless litigation our friends in the environmental community continue to barrage us with, will we in Idaho really be ahead?*

- Management priorities on public lands that need to be developed for both state and local entities;

*(I'm not clear on what is being asked here.) Regardless of who manages our federal public lands, scientific data shows a very clear danger of wildfire consuming more forested acres including those in the so-called 'wildland-urban interface'. Perhaps the best thing that could come from this committee's effort would be demanding and assisting in ramping up the thinning efforts that absolutely need to occur to diminish the threat to our forests and to the communities that are in them. And by the way – doing this would also create jobs and strengthen our state's economy, especially in the rural communities of Idaho that remain in double digit unemployment status. Taking this step is an ABSOLUTE priority.*

- Any further comments you would like to provide relating to the management, control and/or ownership of such public lands in the state of Idaho.

*Again, we appreciate being invited to work with you on this issue and to provide input and hope that we will continue to be invited to participate in your process as you continue your work. Thank you!*