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| **For Immediate Release:** | **Contact:**[Megan Taylor](mailto:Megan_Taylor@heller.senate.gov) |
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**As Nevada Wildfires Burn, Heller Urges Key Senate Panel to Consider Forestry Reform Solutions**

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – As numerous wildfires continue to burn across the state of Nevada, U.S. Senator Dean Heller (R-NV) continues to take action aimed at advancing policies to protect Nevada against the threat of devastating wildfires and mitigate their damage to ranches and communities. Most recently, Heller urged Chairman Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) and Ranking Member Maria Cantwell (D-WA) of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to hold another hearing to discuss the impact of these deadly blazes and important forestry reform solutions.

“*Nevada is still recovering from the Martin Fire, which burned nearly 500,000 acres across the state over a period of two weeks. As a result of that fire, ranchers have lost their property, cattle, and grazing allotments, including the Ninety-Six Ranch in Paradise Valley, Nevada.  The Ninety-Six Ranch is the oldest ranch in my state, and the Stewart Family has operated on these lands, both public and private, for over 150 years.  The Martin Fire burned 100 percent of their BLM grazing allotment as well as some Forest Service and private lands,”* ***wrote Heller****. “As I travel across Nevada, I see firsthand the need for serious forestry reform.  Our land management agencies should not have to maneuver through countless hours of paperwork and waiting periods to remove invasive species, like cheatgrass and pinyon-juniper, which are prime conductors for the start and spread of wildfires*.”

Last year, [Heller introduced the Emergency Fuel Reduction Act](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2017/8/heller-introduces-bill-to-help-prevent-wildfires-in-nevada), legislation that would speed up the timely federal permitting process for hazardous fuel reduction projects on public lands. Additionally, the U.S. Senate recently passed a provision that [Heller authored to increase funding for cross-boundary fire control by $5 million](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=D9F37E9F-A058-4EE5-B24F-F0DADAD7B3B5). Since the federal government manages approximately 85 percent of Nevada’s lands, Heller’s measure would help prevent and mitigate the damage of wildfires in the state that cross over jurisdictional boundaries.

“*Given the devastating effects of this fire season on Nevada and the entire West, I respectfully urge your committee to hold another hearing to review this year’s fire activity and to consider comprehensive forest management reform legislation at the earliest opportunity in order to improve forest health and slow the spread and frequency of wildfires across the western United States*,” **stated Heller.**

A member of the Senate Western Caucus, Heller recently attended a [roundtable discussion](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=9C11C7A7-ACE7-466E-B777-03D76215A3EF) with U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke and U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to continue their conversations surrounding wildfire prevention measures. At the meeting, Heller said this includes innovative technologies such as the [AlertTahoe Fire Monitoring and Early Detection Warning System](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/pressreleases?ID=AEAA0B1D-7D1D-4ED3-9692-7B5767389320), which is used by firefighters to detect, monitor, and prevent fires in the Tahoe basin. [Last month, Heller announced that he secured $226,000 to install new cameras as part of the AlertTahoe System](https://www.heller.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/2018/7/heller-secures-226-000-for-alerttahoe-to-help-prevent-wildfires).

**The full text of the letter, which was sent last week, can be found below:**

*Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell,*

*As wildfires continue to rage across Nevada and the western United States, I commend you for holding a hearing on the wildfire outlook for this year, and I am writing to urge your committee to hold another hearing to discuss the damage these deadly blazes have caused as well as important forestry reform solutions.*

*In June of this year, your Committee held a hearing to examine the outlook for this year’s wildfire season, where you discussed the importance of proper funding mechanisms for our land management agencies as well as forestry management reform.  As noted in the previous hearing, this year’s fire season is shaping up to be one of the worst on record. According to the National Interagency Fire Center, over 41,000 fires have burned six million acres of land across the West. My home state of Nevada accounts for over 870,000 of those acres, threatening and devastating many rural communities.  Nevada is still recovering from the Martin Fire, which burned nearly 500,000 acres across the state over a period of two weeks.*

*As a result of the Martin Fire, ranchers have lost their property, cattle, and grazing allotments, including the Ninety-Six Ranch in Paradise Valley, Nevada.  The Ninety-Six Ranch is the oldest ranch in my state, and the Stewart Family has operated on these lands, both public and private, for over 150 years.  The Martin Fire burned 100 percent of their BLM grazing allotment as well as some Forest Service and private lands.*

*As I travel across Nevada, I see firsthand the need for serious forestry reform.  Our land management agencies should not have to maneuver through countless hours of paperwork and waiting periods to remove invasive species, like cheatgrass and pinyon-juniper, which are prime conductors for the start and spread of wildfires.  This is why I have introduced legislation to speed up the approval process for fuel reduction projects on federal lands, as well as passed an amendment to the Senate’s Interior Appropriations spending bill to increase the amount of funds available for cross-boundary fires.*

*Given the devastating effects of this fire season on Nevada and the entire West, I respectfully urge your committee to hold another hearing to review this year’s fire activity and to consider comprehensive forest management reform legislation at the earliest opportunity in order to improve forest health and slow the spread and frequency of wildfires across the western United States.*

*Thank you for considering this request.  Please do not hesitate to reach out to me or my staff if you have any questions.*

*Sincerely,*

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