

October 1, 2013

Good afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen.

My name is Doug Anderson. My wife and I live at 645 County Rd 1, between Fairplay and Alma, which is, from what I understand, within a Red Zone per the US Forest Service map that was published in Park County's newspaper, the Flume.

I am here because of the article about your Task Force that was published in the September 13, 2013 issue of the Flume, and because I just recently learned from local sources of the opportunity to speak to you today.

Frankly, I am surprised to learn that your Task Force has been meeting for seven months and, to the best of my knowledge, today (the day after your final recommendations were released) is the first opportunity for you to receive public testimony. Please forgive me if I am misinformed on this, but for a subject as important as this, I would have expected you to have ample opportunity for public input throughout the Red Zone areas, with meetings in close proximity to those of us who's homes and often a large percentage of our net worths are at risk.

Having said that, and while I have not yet had the opportunity to read your lengthy report, I do very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today.

Like all of you, my wife and I are very concerned as well about the condition of the forest areas near our home. For our part, we have taken what we believe to be positive steps to reduce the fire risk on our own property, such as removing trees, cutting limbs up to 6' (I now understand recommendations may be up to 8'-10'), controlling underbrush, and cleaning gutters regularly. And we are more than willing to do more, within reason, as may be recommended in the future.

My concern is more about the property owners surrounding our home that have not taken any action to mitigate the risk of fire. Many of them still have dead trees laying on their property from the damaging wind storm a couple of years ago and have taken none of the actions we have taken to minimize the risk of fire. And while a number of the properties surrounding ours are undeveloped and have no structures, many of them pose as serious or greater threat of fire as those containing structures.

I noted in the article published in the Flume that one of the recommendations you have been considering is possible fees to be levied on those of us who live in Red Zones to help pay for fire prevention efforts. Not knowing the details behind such a possible recommendation, I am concerned that those of us who live in Red Zones could well be discriminated against, if such fees are not also levied on those on the coasts where hurricanes are possible, or in the Midwest where tornadoes are

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possible, or in our own state where people live near a stream or river that might flood. To prevent this type of discrimination, any such fees must, I believe, be well defined and be used to either provide an incentive for us to take the actions to mitigate the risk, or to penalize those who do not.

I would not be opposed to a reasonable fee to help pay for local fire departments or state foresters to assess the risks on individual properties and to require a minimum level of mitigation.

In my opinion, some of the proceeds from those fees should then be available to assist property owners with the cost of such required mitigation. And once the mitigation is completed, that property owner should no longer be assessed the fee.

On the other hand, should the owner of a property, developed or not, refuse to do the minimum required level of mitigation, he or she should pay a larger, more onerous fee, until such mitigation is completed.

My insurance company has already completed its own assessment and I am expecting to hear from them soon about what they think I need to do to further mitigate the risk of fire on my own property. That they can control. What neither they nor I can control is how my neighboring property owners behave. For that, we all need reasonable legislation designed to incent property owners to mitigate the risks, and to penalize those who do not.

I look forward to reading your final recommendations and to following the legislative process in this regard. To this end, I would like to be informed as the process continues.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today.

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