

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 27, 2018

Jim Peña, Regional Forester  
Dianne Guidry, Deputy Regional Forester  
Pacific Northwest Region  
United States Forest Service  
1220 SW Third Avenue  
Portland, OR 97204

Dear Mr. Peña and Ms. Guidry:

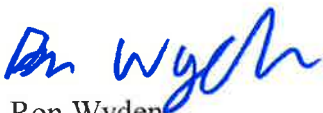
We are writing to request that the US Forest Service strongly consider prioritizing hazardous fuel treatments on and adjacent to the Baker City Watershed in Baker County, Oregon. We have both heard from community leaders who are concerned about the potential for large scale fire within the watershed and the impacts that would have on the city's drinking water.

In a recent follow-up meeting with our offices, the Wallowa Whitman National Forest staff, elected officials and city workers, a multi-stage solution was developed for further exploration. The first stage, with minimal environmental impact, would provide for non-commercial thinning or hazardous fuels reduction alongside existing roads outside an Inventoried Roadless Area (IRA). Field reviews and mapping have already been started to identify priority thinning areas. This fuels reduction project would act to both slow down a potential wildfire threatening the watershed and also serve as a staging area from which to fight the fire. A number of other actions are also under consideration.

Baker City suffered a cryptosporidium outbreak five years ago that sickened a number of residents, also affecting local businesses and causing lay-offs. The city invested in ultraviolet treatment of its water supply to good effect. However, that incident reinforced for the community the absolute necessity of safe, clean drinking water.

The community stands ready to work with the Forest Service to accomplish this project and mitigate the risk to its water supply. Your support for this important hazardous fuels work would be greatly appreciated and significant for this small, rural community.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



Greg P. Walden  
Member of Congress