

Statement of Glenn Casamassa
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Before the
Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining
Legislative Hearing on
S. 2160 “Protect Collaboration for Healthier Forests Act”
August 22, 2018

Chairman Lee, Ranking Member Wyden, members of the Committee, I am Glenn Casamassa, Associate Deputy Chief for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the pilot program as described in S. 2160.

Current leadership at agency and department levels are supportive of the idea of arbitration as a tool to help streamline project decisions. This legislation provides a way to test arbitration within a manageable project environment and within specific sideboards.

More specifically, this bill would limit the types of projects to those developed within a specified collaborative process, or Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program (CFLRP), part of a community wildfire protection plan, or have a purpose to reduce hazardous fuels or mitigate insect and disease infestation, and are located in a Wildland Urban Interface.

In keeping within the scope of a pilot, this bill would apply only to the Forest Service’s Northern Region and would authorize only two projects per year to be designated for arbitration. This program would be in effect for 5 years.

There are minor technical corrections we would recommend and would be happy to work with the committee staff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify on this bill and I look forward to your questions.