USDA United States Department of Agriculture

Office of the Secretary
Washington, DC 20250

August 21, 2023

THE HONORABLE DEBBIE STABENOW
Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry
United States Senate
328A Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow:

Enclosed is a copy of the second report regarding actions taken to carry out Section 8204 of the Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill). The report provides an update regarding progress made since enactment of the 2014 Farm Bill and includes a description of all acres designated and projects treated under the authority.

The 2014 Farm Bill amends the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) by adding sections 602 and 603 to Title VI of HFRA. In 2003, Congress passed the HFRA "to improve the capacity of the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to plan and conduct hazardous fuels reduction projects on National Forest System lands and Bureau of Land Management lands aimed at protecting communities, watersheds, and certain other at-risk lands from catastrophic wildfire, to enhance efforts to protect watersheds and address threats to forest and rangeland health, including catastrophic wildfire, across the landscape, and for other purposes."

Section 602 of HFRA outlines the designation requirements for landscape scale areas, clarifies the purpose of projects carried out in landscape scale areas and sets forth reporting requirements for the implementation of Section 602 authorities. Section 603 of HFRA categorically excludes qualifying projects to reduce the risk or extent of, or increase the resilience to, insect or disease infestation in areas designated under Section 602.

If you have any questions, please have a member of your staff contact the Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720-7095. A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member John Boozman.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK
Secretary

Enclosure