

House Natural Resources Committee

Topic: Wildfire Management and Federal Grazing Policy

14 January 2026

**Highlights:** This hearing examined several pieces of legislation related to wildfire management and federal grazing policy.

Wildfire Response and Preparedness Act of 2025 (H.R.4038) - Rep. Young Kim (R-CA)

- This bill would establish federal wildfire response standards, requiring:
  - Initial assessment within 30 minutes of ignition, and
  - Deployment of suppression assets within 3 hours, where practicable.
- The Forest Service expressed support for the bill's intent, noting it already extinguishes 98% of fires during initial attack but acknowledged the need for better coordination and consistent standards.

Cross-Boundary Wildfire Solutions Act (H.R.3922) - Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO)

- This bill directs the GAO to assess federal and non-federal wildfire mitigation authorities, improving collaboration across federal, state, local, and Tribal lands
- USDA Forest Service Deputy Chief John Crockett acknowledged Tribal lands as part of the national wildfire landscape.

Grasslands Grazing Act of 2025 (H.R.6300) - Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY)

- The bill aims to correct a long-standing inconsistency in federal grazing law.
- Current law (the Federal Land Policy and Management Act—FLPMA) grants permit renewal rights to ranchers on National Forest and BLM lands but does not explicitly extend the same permit protections to National Grasslands.
- This omission has resulted in:
  - Greater uncertainty for grassland ranchers,
  - Uneven permit renewals,
  - Loss of Animal Unit Months (AUMs) in several grassland districts,
  - Administrative burdens for both ranchers and the Forest Service.

- What the bill does:
  - Amends FLPMA to explicitly include National Grasslands in the statutory definition of “National Forest System lands.”
  - Provides 10-year permit terms, priority for reissuance, written notice of violations, and a 2--year- notification requirement before cancellations in emergencies.
  - Would eliminate reliance on year-to---year appropriations fixes.
  - USDA Forest Service supports the bill, requesting only a technical amendment so that all states with national grasslands—including Texas—are covered.
- Rationale presented by supporters:
  - Ranchers need certainty to invest in operations, preserve rangelands, and pass on ranching to future generations.
  - Grazing contributes significantly to rural economies, food security, and ecosystem health.
  - Testimony emphasized that grazing reduces wildfire risk by 45–50%, and even up to 80% with targeted grazing.