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# United States Senate

November 6, 2017

The Honorable Tony Tooke  
United States Forest Service  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Tooke:

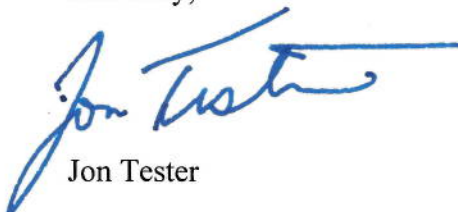
I write to you about troubling reports that the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) is denying its scientists the opportunity to present their research results at the upcoming International Fire Ecology and Management Congress later this month. It is in the best interest of Montanans that these public servants are permitted to share their knowledge with other wildfire experts from across the country and around the world.

The 2017 wildfire season is the most expensive in history. In Montana alone, we've seen more than 1.2 million acres burned by wildfires, with enormous impacts to our state's outdoor economy, destroyed homes and property, and the tragic loss of two firefighters. Now is the time for us to invest in better understanding wildfire and forest management, not silencing Montana voices who have seen wildfire firsthand.

Montana is home to the Missoula Fire Lab, where some of the best minds in the Forest Service work on fuel management, fire modeling, the effects of fire on forest stands, and a wide variety of other topics. It is imperative that you permit these folks to share their work with the public and the larger wildfire community. Our best land management practices are science-based and collaborative. Failing to share new research hampers both of those goals. I respectfully ask that you permit USFS scientists to present their research results at the upcoming International Fire Ecology and Management Congress and other relevant fire or forest management conferences.

I believe we must look for ways to get this nation's debt under control. However, we should not do that at the expense of tackling our growing wildfire challenges that will hurt our kids and grandkids dearly in the years to come.

Sincerely,



Jon Tester

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