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**Subject:** Walden: Better forest management can fight climate change  
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News from Representative Walden

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## CENTRAL OREGON'S NEWS LEADER

### Walden: Better forest management can fight climate change

Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., called for realistic solutions to address climate change during a hearing Wednesday before the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

"Republicans are focused on solutions that prioritize adaptation, innovation, and conservation," said Walden. "Just as America led the world in energy development that has reduced carbon emissions, we want America's innovators to develop the next technologies that will improve the environment and create jobs here at home."

Walden also stressed the need to improve forest management to reduce the catastrophic wildfires that devastate Oregon every summer and pollute the atmosphere with carbon dioxide and particulate matter. Wildfires devastated more than 800,000 acres in Oregon in 2018, and [Walden has met with people on the ground who describe how recent wildfire seasons have impacted their lives](#), a news release from his office said.

"Oregonians choke on smoke every summer from wildfires that burn across our poorly managed federal forests, filling our skies with ash and polluting our airsheds with carbon dioxide," Walden said. "Managing our forests not only reduces the risk of these catastrophic fires, but the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change says that sustainably managing our forests will create the longest sustained carbon mitigation benefit.](#)"

Recent studies by the Nature Conservancy, Forest Service and others have found that active management of fire fuels can reduce the size and intensity of wildfires by up to 70 percent, and can reduce carbon emissions from wildfires by up to 85 percent. [Walden is continuing his push for forest management reforms to prevent catastrophic wildfires in Oregon and across the West](#). Walden has also held hearings each of the last two years to [examine the health and environmental impact of wildfire smoke](#).

During the hearing, Walden raised the topic of wildfire mitigation through active forest

management with Dr. Brenda Ekwurzel, Director of Climate Science for the Union of Concerned Scientists. [Dr. Ekwurzel, stated that practices such as prescribed burns and other forest management techniques are needed to reduce excess fuel loads.](#)

Under Walden's leadership, Congress passed into law the [most significant reforms to forest management in more than a decade](#), as well as legislation to [promote renewable energy solutions such as hydropower](#).

"Hydropower has great success as a clean energy source in my Oregon district and generates approximately 40 percent of the electricity in my state," Walden said during the hearing. "Legislation we passed into law last Congress will streamline the permitting process for closed-loop pumped hydropower projects. One such project in my district aims to generate enough power for 600,000 homes in southern Oregon."

Walden said that adapting America's power portfolio in a way that benefits both the economy and the environment is the best course of action. But he said he's concerned that certain Democratic proposals to address climate change will impose an excessive cost burden on American energy consumers and taxpayers, and threaten jobs and economic growth.

"We want a healthy environment for our children, grandchildren, and their children. But we also want the people who live in our districts and in this country today, right now, to have jobs and to be able to provide for their families," Walden said. "These are not mutually exclusive principles. Working together, we can develop the public policies to achieve these goals."

To read a full transcript of Walden's remarks during Wednesday's hearing, [click here](#).

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