

URGENT LETTER TO GOVERNOR HOBBS

Email: engage@az.gov

February 3, 2024

The Honorable Katie Hobbs, Governor of Arizona

We property owners of rural neighborhoods, north of Williams on the beautiful Kaibab Plateau, have added our names to this letter for the purpose of seeking relief from the destructive actions of the Department of Forestry & Fire Management (DFFM). We further request that you cause the DFFM to immediately cooperate and collaborate with local property owners affected by their Hazardous Fuel Removal Project and modify their plans to only remove trees that are absolutely necessary to effectively reduce fire hazards.

Many rural property homeowners adjacent to or near state land are devastated to find this land to be almost entirely cleared of the native Pinyon and Juniper trees. This is being done as part of the Hazardous Fuel Removal Project. Instead of removing dead timber that are truly hazardous fuels, they are aggressively removing thousands of trees on hundreds of acres of state land and leaving dead trees behind. Despite our area being determined as a low risk at their own risk assessment portal called AZWRAP, they have swarmed in with their chainsaws and machinery, changing the landscape for generations to come. All this has been done without any communication or collaboration with the adjacent property owners affected by this project. Here are just a few examples of the adverse impacts of this project:

- Creating large areas of grasslands (inviting flammable grasses and noxious weeds) leaving hundreds of piles of dead trees behind with no plans for removal;
- Reducing property values resulting from tree removals around the neighborhood;
- Reducing desirability for prospective buyers who prefer to live near trees;
- Increasing potential for flooding in areas that are sloped on hillsides;
- Potentially damaging dirt roads privately maintained at the cost of the homeowners, as has happened in Flagstaff following recent fires;
- Destroying wildlife habitat for Pinyon Jays, the fastest declining bird species in the US;
- Reducing wildlife habitat for deer and elk and other animals that use the forest for shelter and food;
- Destroying Native American archeological sites and petroglyphs;
- Disrupting the quality of life for residents and visitors seeking interaction with our native wildlife and birds that have disappeared.

We property owners are not opposed to reasonable selective thinning done in a careful manner that allows spacing between the trees and grasses to grow for grazing animals. However, we do object to the extreme and aggressive destruction to large sections of the Pinyon and Juniper woodland forest. Three additional neighborhoods (Red Lake Estates, Cedar Mountain Heights & Chaparral Heights) have been identified for aggressive tree removal. Without your swift intervention, this beautiful region will be destroyed for generations to come. We urgently seek your direction to cause the DFFM to take no further action without the collaboration and agreement of affected homeowners.

We sincerely thank you for your time and consideration.

Names added on next page

Name

Signature
