

RESOLUTION NO. 14-1304

A RESOLUTION OF THE TOWN OF PINETOP-LAKESIDE, URGING THE U.S. CONGRESS AND THE U.S. FOREST SERVICE TO TAKE MEANINGFUL STEPS TO PROVIDE INCREASED FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO ARIZONA'S LOCAL FORESTS, PARTICULARLY THE APACHE-SITGREAVES NATIONAL FORESTS

WHEREAS, America's national forests have their origins in legislation adopted by Congress in the late 19th century that provided that any new "forest reserves" would have to meet the criteria of forest protection, watershed protection, and timber production; and

WHEREAS, for decades, national forests were an environmental, recreational, and economic asset for neighboring communities, providing forest products for a thriving timber industry, recreation for families, and environmental awareness for conservationists; and

WHEREAS, the significant insolvency of Arizona's timber industry during the 1980's and 1990's, along with additional lawsuits from environmental groups and federal mismanagement, led to a dramatic increase in tree density throughout Arizona's national forests and, coupled with severe drought conditions, gave rise to wildfires on a scale never seen before in the state's history; and

WHEREAS, the six largest wildfires in Arizona history— the Rodeo-Chediski Fire (which burned 460,000 acres), the Aspen Fire (84,750 acres), the Willow Fire (119,500 acres), the Cave Creek Fire (243,950 acres), the Wallow Fire (537,900 acres), and the Horseshoe 2 Fire (222,954 acres)— have all occurred in the last twelve years; and

WHEREAS, prior to 1990, the largest wildfire in state history was the Carrizo Fire, which burned 57,000 acres in 1971; and

WHEREAS, following the Rodeo-Chediski Fire, a consensus emerged among forest stakeholders that the growing size and frequency of wildfires demanded a new approach to forest management that must include partnerships and investment with private industry to aggressively thin Arizona's national forests at landscape scales, which resulted in the formation of the White Mountain Stewardship Contract; and

WHEREAS, the White Mountain Stewardship Contract—supported by a broad range of stakeholders, including environmental groups, experts in academia, local governments, and the timber industry—has succeeded in creating businesses, jobs, and other stewardship initiatives to reintroduce industry to Arizona's forests, which are needed to perform the restoration work at or near-zero cost to the government; and

WHEREAS, the White Mountain Stewardship Contract led to industries investing millions of dollars in infrastructure to harvest and utilize forest restoration projects which, in turn, reduced the cost to the federal government for forest restoration treatments; and

WHEREAS, although the White Mountain Stewardship Contract will be completed in August 2014, treatments must continue in Arizona's national forests, and the region's forest industries need a reliable and steady wood supply to sustain the investment and maintain the jobs created in the last nine years; and

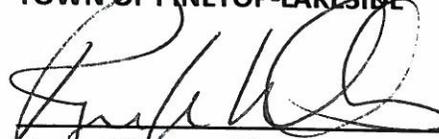
WHEREAS, these stakeholders agree that the U.S. Forest Service must commit the resources and reforms necessary to implement landscape-scale forest thinning and to provide harvest-ready acres on a consistent basis for existing and emerging industry in Arizona; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside places the highest importance on the issues of forest management and the use of appropriately scaled industry to preserve the safety of our communities, the health of our forests, and the strength of our economy.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside, to respectfully request that members of the Arizona Congressional delegation, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Chief of the Forest Service to take meaningful steps to provide increased financial support to Arizona's local forests, particularly the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, keep existing industry supplied with enough treatable acres, and to collaboratively move forward with forest stakeholders on major forest thinning projects to allow the industry that has committed to forest restoration in the past to continue to survive and thrive in the future.

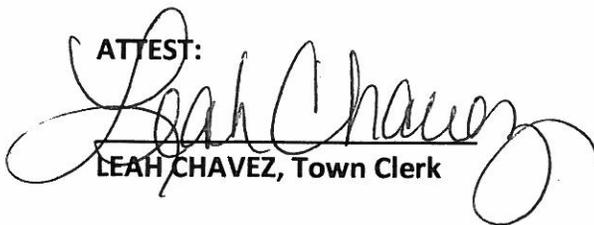
PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Mayor and Town Council of the Town of Pinetop-Lakeside, Arizona, this 6th day of March, 2014.

TOWN OF PINETOP-LAKESIDE



Roger Williams, Mayor

ATTEST:



LEAH CHAVEZ, Town Clerk

APPROVED AS TO FORM:



W. KENT FOREE, Town Attorney