

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 16, 2011

The Honorable Tom Tidwell  
Chief, U.S. Forest Service  
Yates Building, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor  
201 14<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Tidwell:

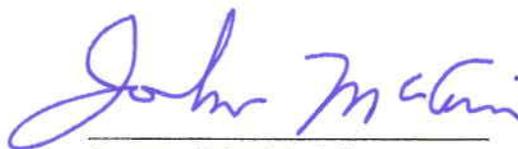
Within the past month, roughly a half million acres have burned in the State of Arizona in what has become one of the worst wildlife seasons in the history of our state. As you manage this ongoing crisis, we respectfully request that you ensure the U.S. Forest Service immediately notify local communities of any potential post-wildfire flood risks that could originate from federal land.

Residents who are fortunate enough not to lose their homes to these fires may instead face years of flooding because of the altered watershed conditions in our forests. Despite taking the appropriate wildfire precautions on their own properties, some of these homeowners will have no choice but to purchase federal flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) in anticipation of the next likely natural disaster. Because NFIP policies prevent contracts from taking effect until 30 days after the date of purchase, each National Forest in Arizona should provide communities with as much advance warning as possible when neighboring federal land turns into flood hazard areas. Our constituents cannot afford to wait for Burn Area Emergency Response teams to begin formal assessments of watershed conditions before this critical information is released by the Forest Service.

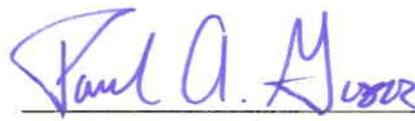
You have seen firsthand the devastating impacts that the Schultz Fire floods are having in several northern Arizona communities, a situation where federal flood insurance coverage did not go into effect in time. As stewards of federal land, we ask that the Forest Service notify neighboring private property owners about the potential for flooding as these wildfire incidents are managed.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



Senator John McCain



Congressman Paul A. Gosar