



COUNTY OF MITCHELL

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Resolution of Support by the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners:

Supporting Wildfire Mitigation and Timber Recovery Efforts

WHEREAS, Tropical Storm Helene caused catastrophic tree damage in Mitchell County, resulting in the greatest amount of timber loss in Western North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, downed timber, as it dries, presents an extremely high risk of catastrophic wildfires, threatening lives, properties, infrastructure, and natural resources in Mitchell County and neighboring areas; and

WHEREAS, financial damages from timber loss are the highest in Tropical Storm Helene's path, with Mitchell County's timber loss estimated by the North Carolina Forest Service at \$41,063,580; and

WHEREAS, approximately 80% of this timber damage occurred on private lands, directly impacting families who rely on the sale of timber as a supplemental income source; and

WHEREAS, fallen timber retains higher economic value if harvested prior to the spring green-out, and timely action is essential to prevent economic and ecological losses; and

WHEREAS, the complex and hazardous conditions involved in harvesting downed trees, which are often jammed and under pressure, require additional resources and support for both landowners and timber companies; and

WHEREAS, effective wildfire mitigation measures, including incentivized timber harvest programs, controlled burns, and other forest management practices, are vital to reducing the risk of catastrophic wildfires and supporting local economic recovery;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners formally support state and federal initiatives to:

1. Provide financial incentives and technical assistance to landowners and timber companies for the safe and efficient harvest of downed timber.
2. Expand and fund wildfire mitigation programs, including controlled burns and forest management practices, to reduce wildfire risks in Mitchell County and surrounding areas.
3. Develop programs that address the unique challenges faced by private landowners in managing large-scale timber loss, with a focus on preserving the economic value of downed timber and fostering sustainable recovery.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners will actively collaborate with state and federal agencies, forestry experts, and local stakeholders to advocate for the necessary resources and policy adjustments to address these urgent challenges.

Adopted this day, January 9, 2025, by the Mitchell County Board of Commissioners.

Chairperson: Jeff Harding, Jeff Harding

Vice-Chairperson: Steve Pitman, Steve Pitman

Commissioner: Harley Masters, Harley Masters

Commissioner: Dale Blevins, Dale Blevins

Commissioner: Lee Ellis, Lee Ellis

Attest: Deidre McKinney Deidre McKinney
Mitchell County Clerk