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## Trump Blames CA Fires on State's Forest Mismanagement

**The president's criticism is absolutely right on the merits, if off on his timing.**

Thomas Gallatin

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The wildfires currently bringing death and massive devastation to communities in California are a direct result of the state having embraced radical environmentalism years ago. The Camp Fire, now California's most destructive fire on record, has caused the death of at least 31 people with over 200 still missing, and it has destroyed the entire town of Paradise, 120 miles north of Sacramento. The unfolding tragedy is truly hard to fathom.

In light of this growing disaster, President Donald Trump on Saturday vented his frustration, asserting, "There is no reason for these massive, deadly and costly forest fires in California except that forest management is so poor. Billions of dollars are given each year, with so many lives lost, all because of gross mismanagement of the forests. Remedy now, or no more Fed payments!" But Trump also offered praise to firefighters struggling to contain the blaze and condolences for those lives lost, saying, "More than 4,000 are fighting the Camp and Woolsey Fires in California that have burned over 170,000 acres. Our hearts are with those fighting the fires, the 52,000 who have evacuated, and the families of the 11 who have died. The destruction is catastrophic. God Bless them all."

Not surprisingly, Trump's blaming of the state's forest mismanagement and threatening to withhold federal funding didn't play well with some, and they allege that the president is politicizing a tragedy. California Governor-elect Gavin Newsom (D) reprimanded Trump: "Lives have been lost. Entire towns have been burned to the ground. Cars abandoned on the side of the road. People are being forced to flee their homes. This is not a time for partisanship. This is a time for coordinating relief and response and lifting those in need up."

We'll concede that his timing in the midst of the ongoing catastrophe where people are dying comes across as tone-deaf and even politically opportunistic. However, as usual, Trump's observations are actually right on the merits. California's leftist leaders, guided by their ideological commitments, have appeased the environmentalist lobby's anti-economic growth demands for decades. In so doing, the state adopted "feel-good" environmentalist policies rather than the more scientifically sound conservationist approach that would have balanced environmental considerations with that of industry. The resulting forest mismanagement has

contributed to the current environmental conditions now responsible for these increasingly massive wildfires.

Meanwhile, California's outgoing Democrat Gov. Jerry Brown has sought to shift the blame away from the state's failed forest management policies and onto climate change, but research meteorologist Ryan Maue called him out in August, stating, "Please take a deep breath and read up on California's forest management issues that are decades in the making. Governor Brown blames climate change for wildfires and avoids any meaningful conversation on policy solutions." And meteorologist Joe Bastardi predicted this fire season in May.