



## Senate Panel Approves Feinstein Measure to Provide \$34.3 Million to Fix Flood-Damaged Roads in Southern California Forests

*-- Roads critical to efforts to fight fires in Southern California's bark beetle infested forests --*

April 6, 2005

**Washington, DC** – The Senate Appropriations Committee today approved an amendment sponsored by Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) to the FY '05 Supplemental that would provide \$34.3 million in emergency funding to repair national forest roads and facilities in Southern California that were damaged by winter flooding. This funding is critical to efforts to fight potentially catastrophic forest fires in the region's national forests.

**“More than 90 percent of access roads in Southern California's national forests were washed away in this winter's floods, leaving 2.3 million acres inaccessible to ground-based fire crews,”** Senator Feinstein said. **“If there is a serious fire this summer, crews simply won't be able to reach vast tracts of land, and entire forests could go up in smoke. This funding is urgently needed to fix the roads, protect communities, and save lives.”**

The amendment includes:

- \$31.9 million for capital improvement and maintenance to repair damaged fire roads and trails in the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests; and
- \$2.4 million in National Forest System funding to repair facilities.

Separately, the committee provided \$103 million for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Emergency Watershed Protection program, \$11 million of which is expected to fund projects in Southern California. This will include projects to stabilize streambanks to protect homes, remove sediment to restore flood channel capacity, and construct temporary floodwalls and sediment storage basins to prevent flooding in Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and San Diego Counties.

Last winter, 70 to 90 inches of rain fell in Southern California forests, causing mudslides and flooding in the region's National Forests. According to the Forest Service, up to 90%-95% of the back roads through the Angeles, Cleveland, Los Padres, and San Bernardino National Forests have been washed away or covered by mudslides. These roads are crucial to fire suppression. Without repair, 2.3 million acres will be inaccessible to firefighters this summer.

Two years ago, intense fires burned 739,597 acres in these national forests, destroying

3631 homes and killing 24 people. Fuel loads may be worse this year because of grasses that have grown as a result of last winter's rains.

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