

10     **A RESOLUTION CONCERNING THE PREVENTION OF WILDFIRES**

20     **WHEREAS:**     Fires create plant and animal habitats throughout the United States, there is no  
30                             question that many ecosystems would not exist in the absence of fire; and,

40     **WHEREAS:**     George D. Kessler, professor of forestry, and extension forester at Clemson  
50                             University notes that controlled burning reduces fuels, may improve wildlife  
60                             habitat, controls competing vegetation, improves short term forage for  
70                             grazing, improves accessibility, helps control tree disease, and perpetuates fire  
80                             dependent species; and,

90     **WHEREAS:**     A study done in Maine had one section of forest managed by man, including the  
100                            use of controlled burns, another was left completely sealed off and left to grow  
110                            on it's own. At the end of this study the section of forest that was managed by  
120                            humans was found to be in better health than the forest left to mother nature; and,

130    **WHEREAS:**     The ardent fire suppression of the past few decades means that a lot of  
140                            underbrush, fallen branches, and dead and dying trees; that would otherwise burn  
150                            away every couple of years haven't done so; and,

160    **WHEREAS:**     In California, the National Park Service allows some wildfires to burn in the high  
170                            Sierra in California and the Forest Service monitors some wildfires, in general,  
180                            there's an aggressive put-it-out policy that extinguishes most fires, because of  
190                            potential danger to people and property; and,

200    **WHEREAS:**     The fires in Southern California in October raged through over 500,000 acres,  
210                            inspiring the largest-scale human evacuation in the state's history. Some half-  
220                            million residents were displaced from their homes , and more than 1,800 homes  
230                            went up in flames, more than a billion dollars of property damage has been  
240                            reported, over eighty people were injured and seven people have been killed;  
250                            and,

260    **WHEREAS:**     In light of the recent fires, Richard Minnich, a fire ecologist at the University of  
270                            California, Riverside, argues that putting out small fires in wilderness areas,  
280                            rather than letting them burn slowly, has created excess fuel for fires to ignite in  
290                            dangerous weather conditions, such as the West's dry Santa Ana winds.

300    **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:** That the Maryland Student Legislature urges the federal  
310                            government to enact legislation mandating that controlled burns be permitted in  
320                            areas that are at a high risk of wildfires to prevent much larger and deadly  
330                            wildfires.

340    **MANDATES:**  
350                            George W Bush, President  
360                            Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House  
370                            Harry Reid, Senate Majority Leader  
380                            Mitch McConnell, Senate Minority Leader  
390                            Steny Hoyer, House Majority Leader  
400                            John Boehner, House Minority Leader

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