



# PRESS RELEASE JAMES A. MCCLURE

United States Senate

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT:

437 Senate Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20510 (202) 225-2752  
434 Borah Post Office Bldg., Boise, Idaho 83702 (208) 343-1421  
305 Federal Bldg., Coeur d'Alene, Idaho 83814 (208) 664-3086

McClure Questions Forest Burning Study  
For IMMEDIATE RELEASE, Monday, April 9, 1973

For Res 1-2

WASHINGTON D. C. -- U. S. Sen. James A. McClure has labled a Forest Service environmental impact statement on controlled-burning in Idaho timberlands as being "superficial and grossly inadequate."

The Idaho senator's sharply worded charge came in a letter to Steve Yurich, Regional Forester in Missoula, in which McClure leveled a series of pointed questions that he felt "went largely ignored in the impact study." (The environmental impact statement was submitted by the Forest Service to justify yearly brush-burn of 10,000 to 15,000 acres of timberland in the Spokane, St. Joe, Clearwater and Salmon River drainage areas to provide additional browse for Idaho's Elk herd.)

"In demanding answers from the Forest Service," McClure explained, "we have raised a series of questions that should have been thoroughly covered, but that were glossed over in the most haphazard fashion possible. The study is rife with contradictions and does not even begin to convince me that the Forest Service should be given approval for this program."

"For example, the Forest Service cannot decide what is and is not air pollution. In one section of their report, they say the proposed brush burning 'meets current air pollution standards,' but later say clearly that it 'constitutes air pollution.'

"If it is the latter," McClure said, "then I believe the Federal government has a responsibility to live up to the same air

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pollution standards it enforces over the private sector. And if it is indeed not pollution, then we have seed men in North Idaho, Eastern Washington and Oregon who have been wrongfully told they can no longer burn their grass fields -- something essential to seed production. Yet the Federal government is proposing to burn a total 300,000 acres of brush in the next four decades."

"The writers of this statement can't even bring themselves to use the word smoke.' Instead, they say, 'During the oxidation process, particulates will be put into the atmosphere by convection currents caused by the fire.' In my book, that's smoke," the Senator quipped.

The environmental statement contains double thinking on almost every issue. "The assessment of how timber potential will be affected by the proposed burning gives two completely opposite answers. On one hand, it says, 'no significant amounts of merchantable timber could be grown in the impact areas in the next fifty years..., ' then it says later, 'Much of the land that is being burned to produce browse could also be used to grow trees.' This is double talk," McClure said, "and the people of Idaho deserve better."