

Help protect communities near the Los Padres National Forest

**How the Big Sur Forest Service Management Unit Act would contribute to
the shortage of affordable housing in Big Sur
And
How the act should be changed to help solve the affordable housing problem**

The workforce housing problem

Big Sur employers report it is becoming increasingly difficult for employees to obtain affordable housing in Big Sur. As a result, many people who work in Big Sur drive long distances from where they live to work in Big Sur. It is not uncommon for people to drive from as far as the Salinas Valley and Marina. Such commutes entail not only long distances, but contribute to congestion on roadways such as Highway 68 and Highway 1 through Carmel.

Contributing to the cost of housing is the decreasing amount of private land in the area, which contributes in turn to increased cost of land. As explained on [the Buyout page](#) of this website, the US Forest Service and other government agencies have acquired about one third of the private land in the Big Sur area since the 1980s, amounting to tens of thousands of acres of land that has been removed from private ownership.

As explained on the Buyout page, it appears that at least some of the acquisitions of land by the Forest Service have been unlawful.

How the Big Sur Forest Service Management Unit Act would contribute to the workforce housing problem

As currently written, the bill would encourage continued acquisition of private land by the Forest Service outside the boundaries of the Los Padres National Forest. See [the Buyout page](#) for more on how the bill would contribute to this problem.

The Forest Service has limited statutory authority to donate, sell or lease land once it has been acquired, and there appears to be no existing authority the Forest Service could readily use to return substantial amounts of land into private ownerships to enable its use as sites for affordable workforce housing. You can find links to existing statutory authorities for transfer of land out of Forest Service ownership [by clicking here](#).

How the Big Sur Forest Service Management Unit Act should be changed to help relieve the shortage of affordable workforce housing in Big Sur

To help alleviate the shortage of affordable workforce housing in Big Sur, please communicate your support for the following changes to the Big Sur Forest Service Management Unit Act to Congressman Farr, and email a copy of your letter of support to farrsbill@gmail.com so it can be submitted into the record of Congressional hearings if necessary.

- Provide in the bill that the Forest Service is authorized to donate, sell and lease land for use as affordable workforce housing sites in the Big Sur area. This would not require the Forest Service to provide land, or to build affordable housing. It would however enable the Forest Service to readily provide land for affordable workforce housing wherever that would be desirable.
- Provide in the bill that decisions by the Forest Service related to donation, sale and lease of land for affordable workforce housing sites in the Big Sur area will not be subject to the National Environmental Policy Act or other laws that could be used to delay or block the transfer. Forest Service decisions to acquire private land in Big Sur were not subjected to such processes.