

Salvage logging bill makes sense

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A salvage logging bill making its way through the U.S. House could provide benefits to the Black Hills National Forest, despite concerns.

The Forest Emergency Recovery and Research Act has passed through the House resources committee but still must go through the transportation and agriculture committees before making it to the floor.

It's co-sponsored by Rep. Stephanie Herseth and has a simple goal: Making salvage logging easier - but not required - on federal land damaged by fire, insects or other problems. And revenue from that logging would be used to help rehabilitate the land.

The bill would bypass environmental assessment and review now required, but it also would mandate establishment of practices and procedures - which would be developed regionally. The bill also prohibits salvage logging in wilderness areas.

"It is not my intent to make this a glorified salvage bill," Herseth said.

This has a way to go before approval, but it's got benefits for South Dakota. It's a sensible compromise that balances environmental concerns with logging.