

## "A Helping Hand from the Top"

It is often a painful disaster that brings awareness to an ongoing plight which has been recognized and acknowledged as a source of concern for many years yet remained in the shadows of public awareness, if not even downplayed by some. On the last day of year 2018,



President Trump Surveys Wildfire Destruction in California

horrified by deadly wildfires, President Trump signed an executive order heralded by almost everyone in forest

management on how funding certain measures will mitigate future wildfires and rehabilitate devastated forests. It is named *"Promoting Active Management of America's Forests, Rangelands and other Federal Lands to Improve Conditions and Reduce Wildfire Risk"*.

The order is long and detailed, and sections of it read as if they were taken from Air Burners' playbook: support forest fuels management for forest fire mitigation, create defensible zones between homes, businesses, public facilities and the woodlands, and clean up the forest from dead trees by prudent post-fire cleanup measures, forest rehabilitation and removal of invasive species. Finally, collecting the debris and eliminating it on-site in Air Burners FireBox machines!

This is not a new idea at all, but suddenly embodying all these measures in a presidential executive order coming from the White House, puts it in the national spotlight although even that appears to have been mainly ignored by most of the mainstream media, save for specialty outlets with a direct focus on forestry, environment and biomass related issues.

It was at the very beginning of this century when Air Burners was approached by the US Forest Service San Dimas Technology and Development Center in San Dimas, California to put the focus on Air Burners' Air Curtain Burner Systems as an essential tool for forest fuels management. Tests were carried out at a 9,000-foot-high landing near Baker City, Oregon, where Air Burners deployed one of its burn-boxes to support the project. The USDA Forest Service Missoula Fire Sciences Lab in Missoula, Montana, supported the project and analyzed collected test data.

This led to the Government's publishing of a couple of often cited 2002 reports referred to as the *Alan Shapiro "Tech Tip: The Use of Air Curtain Destructors for Fuel Reduction"* from San Dimas and the *Ron Babbit "Reducing PM2.5 Emissions Through Technology"* report, from Missoula. These reports have been quoted by countless permitting agencies in support of the use of our air curtain burners and have been further substantiated by additional elaborate tests conducted by various government agencies, including the US-EPA and Australian EPA.

Years ago, the USDA funded a grant program that was repeated for many years called the *Wildland-Urban Interface Grant Program*. It was designed to help pay for forest fuels management endeavors and funded a number of air curtain burners in Western States and over time our machines have found widespread acceptance in the forest and disaster recovery industries throughout the US and Canada.



Air Burners Model S-327 in Full Operation  
at a Wood Waste Collection Site

As is usually the case, funding is an issue, especially for budget items that seem not to produce anything but are earmarked to prevent events that could possibly occur, but then may not occur. Many times, we have seen attempts by local government authorities to acquire FireBoxes for forest fuels management or disaster recovery that have not been fruitful, because of lack of money. Also, much too often those that favored chipping and grinding the collected wood waste residue have prevailed, sadly, because that process is more lucrative to some hired private contractors, as chipping is not a waste elimination process. FireBox burning completely eliminates the waste. Grinding it into mulch is merely an interim step to make transportation simpler to some distant dumping ground. Of course, this adds two additional profit centers for the contractors – all at the expense of taxpayers.

We are very pleased that pursuant to the President's executive order, funding will be provided to governmental bodies on all levels, including local and tribal.

Supported by federal and state forest service and fire suppression agencies, the local authorities know best how to tackle their area wildfire mitigation problems. With adequate funding they are bound to be successful in avoiding wildfires and will carry out fruitful post-fire cleanup and rebuilding where needed.

California has been very instrumental in paving the way for the use of air curtain burn-boxes to mitigate wildfires and, laudably, CALFIRE has long embraced the FireBoxes as essential tools in its assessment of what works to get the job done. CALFIRE's efforts have certainly helped to minimize the detrimental effect of recent wildfire seasons, however devastating the aftermath. California's open-minded posture has also helped pave the way for our FireBoxes to play an important role in replacing open pile burning of agricultural waste material in addition to supporting forest waste reduction.

Although Air Burners has perfected its machines for efficient and environmentally friendly wood waste disposal, it is now well known that we have not stopped there. Our revolutionary Biomass-to-Energy conversion systems, the *PGFireBox*<sup>®</sup> that far outpaces all others on the biomass-to-energy market, will likely be a focal point for government agencies tasked with getting rid of the millions of dead trees in Western forests. Additionally, all the slash collected from fuels management missions can be converted to electric and thermal energy by the portable, easy to relocate *PGFireBox*<sup>®</sup> systems, now that reasonable funding support can be expected from the Federal Government. Placing the *PGFireBox*<sup>®</sup> near where the wood waste is amassed will eliminate the cost of traditional grinding, trucking and landfilling and will further augment the cost savings.

We at Air Burners are prepared to meet the challenge that is likely coming our way, and applaud the President for his thoughtful and prudent decision to issue the *Forest Management Executive Order* to help the people that the Government serves, not those who time and again favor the status quo for their own gain – monetarily, philosophically, or to impose their own world-view.

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