

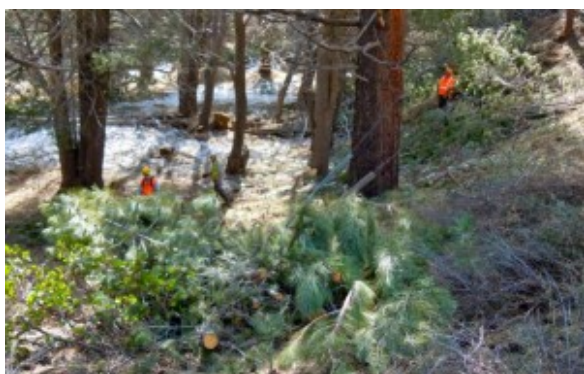
Debt remains from Nev. Fire Safe Council

By Andrew Doughman, Las Vegas Sun

Firefighters and small businesses in Nevada and California have a simple request for the federal government.

Pay up.

They cleared brush, chopped down trees, and then submitted invoices in expectation that they'd be paid soon after. But that was more than two years ago, and they're collectively still owed \$2.56 million.



Lake Christopher in South Lake Tahoe has trees removed in 2011. Photo/LTN file

Meanwhile, lawmakers such as Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev., have decried the role of climate change in the wildfires ravaging the West and Sen. Dean Heller, R-Nev., has called for more fire prevention funding in a year when such funds seem to have dried up.

But those who have already performed the work are hoping that their simple request to be compensated for it will become a priority for the government.

“It’s work completed, and I haven’t been paid, so yeah, it’s not good,” said James Piercy, owner of Arbor Care, a Lake Tahoe small business that did some of the brush work in the Tahoe basin. “For the last two years, we called them on a weekly basis following up in what the status of payment was going to be and they strung us along forever, and this year we just pretty much gave up on trying to call them.”

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