



U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
Subcommittee on Federal Spending Oversight

Senator Rand Paul, M.D. (Kentucky), Chairman



WASTE REPORT for December 14, 2015

Only You Can Prevent...Coffee Stains?

Maybe you have anguished over a coffee stain on your pants or prayed an errant blotch of marinara sauce would come out of a white shirt. Well, it seems **the U. S. Forest Service is concerned about laundry too, which is why earlier this year they spent almost \$25,000 to build the Smokey Bear Laundromat at the Lincoln National Forest in Ruidoso, New Mexico.**¹

The project solicitation calls for converting a single-car garage at the Smokey Bear Ranger House into a six-machine Laundromat. However, this expense is just for the facility, the washers and dryers were not included in the \$25,000 price.

Some readers may be envisioning a remote outpost² far from civilization. However, the Lincoln National Forest abuts the town of Ruidoso, and the **Ranger House itself is right off of a highway, across from a golf resort and next to commercial shopping on both sides.**³ It is basically just another business, with a giant back yard, off a city street. Even the solicitation for the project notes that **lodging and meals can be found within two miles of the worksite.**⁴

More surprising is the proposed location for the government Laundromat would be just 0.2 miles from Becker's Mountain Laundry and just 0.3 miles to Evergreen Cleaner, which offers laundry services.⁵ But when the taxpayer is footing the bill, 0.2 miles seems a lot longer.

Ruidoso, by the way, is hardly a small, remote hamlet. In fact, Ruidoso is something of a tourist destination with a Micropolitan Statistical Area population of 21,223 and over 7,500 housing units.⁶ Forest Service personnel can easily live in the local community and **hardly need a full complement of accommodations, such as laundry services, at the Smokey Bear Ranger House.**

Taxpayers getting taken to the cleaners once again.

¹ *Smokey Bear Laundromat*; U.S. Forest Service- Lincoln National Forest, NM; Fedbizopps Solicitation Number AG-7512-S-15-0023

² Remote outposts in Lincoln National Forest (which is actually comprised of three districts sprawling over 1,000,000 acres) do have laundry facilities.

³ <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Becker's+Mountain+Laundry/@33.347922,-105.675754,15z/data=!4m2!3m1!1s0x0:0x4e7a642b954b60b1>

⁴ *Smokey Bear Laundromat*; U.S. Forest Service- Lincoln National Forest, NM; Fedbizopps Solicitation Number AG-7512-S-15-0023

⁵ Calculated by Google Maps

⁶ *City Data for Ruidoso, New Mexico*; Country Homes of America; December 2015