



Gunnison County Board of County Commissioners

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July 18, 2012

The Honorable Rob Bishop, Chairman
The Honorable Raúl Grijalva, Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva:

The Board of County Commissioners of Gunnison County Colorado understands that the House Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands will be considering HR 6089, the Healthy Forest Management Act of 2012. Gunnison County is a western Colorado county with significant national forest lands, and as such, we would like to add our support for this resolution.

Though we have largely avoided the insect infestation that plagues many Colorado counties, we are suffering from a severe drought this year and are concerned about the prospect of large, intensive and destructive wildfires. We view forest health as a proactive measure for wildfire mitigation and believe that HR 6089 contains provisions that will take needed steps to address this issue.

Another feature of the bill is that it not only recognizes the authority of the Departments of Interior and Agriculture, but that it also provides for strong collaboration with state and local governments. In particular, HR 6089 allows flexibility for local governments to initiate forest health mitigation measures.

In Gunnison County we have several examples of local fuel providers, particularly in regards to woody biomass, who have been thwarted in their businesses by the time limits on stewardship contracts. Extending the stewardship timeframe to up to twenty years, as HR 6089 does, is of special interest to us.

We appreciate your and your subcommittee's work on these vital issues and thank you for providing state and local governments more tools to help protect our public lands and forest health.

Sincerely,

A blue ink signature of Hap Channell, written in a cursive style.

Hap Channell, Chairperson

A blue ink signature of Paula Swenson, written in a cursive style.

Paula Swenson, Commissioner

A blue ink signature of Phil Chamberland, written in a cursive style.

Phil Chamberland, Commissioner