



**MONTROSE COUNTY**  
**BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**  
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Congressman Scott Tipton  
225 N. 5th St., Suite 702  
Grand Junction, CO. 81501

Re: H.R. 695 “Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act”

March 3, 2015

Dear Mr. Tipton,

On behalf of the people of Montrose County, Colorado, we are hereby expressing our unanimous support for H.R. 695 aka the “Healthy Forest Management Act and Wildfire Prevention Act”. Lands administered by the National Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management make up the majority of Montrose County which is approximately 70% public lands. This proposed legislation addresses several of the critical issues which are facing our public lands.

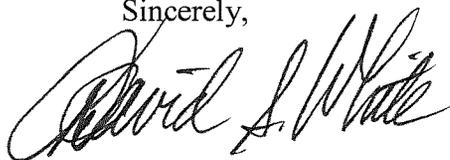
As forest conditions have deteriorated, the management practices of the Forest Service and BLM have proven to be cumbersome when addressing pressing issues like insect infestation and fuels management. The result has been an increase in catastrophic wildfires in the western United States as evidenced by the 2012 fire season. The ongoing drought and epidemic levels of beetles will amplify the number and severity of these occurrences. It is not reasonable to continue to apply reactive, top down policies which were created without knowledge of current forest conditions.

By allowing for designation and treatment of high risk areas, this Act provides a mechanism for public lands agencies to proactively manage forest conditions in cooperation with states and counties. Proactive management and expedited processes are critical to building stand resiliency in future forests. Active management activities also mitigate rapid accumulation of fuels in our forests. The forest conditions which result from these issues pose a direct threat to the health and safety of adjoining residents. The fuels reduction activities authorized by the Act are necessary to mitigate threats to public safety.

We are also supportive of the Act’s provisions with regard to extending the duration of stewardship contracts. These contracts can provide a cost effective means of treatment, particularly when commercial harvest is utilized.

We urge Congress to pass H.R. 695 and to provide adequate funding for full and immediate implementation of this legislation.

Sincerely,



David White  
Chairman



Glen Davis  
Vice-Chairman



Ron Henderson  
Commissioner