



# DELTA COUNTY, COLORADO

## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Dist. 1: C. Douglas Atchley - Dist. 2: C. Bruce Hovde - Dist. 3: J. Mark Roeber

March 3, 2015

Congressman Scott Tipton  
218 Cannon HOB  
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 695 "Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act"

Dear Representative Tipton,

The Delta Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) fully supports H.R. 695, the Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act. Delta County is 55% U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management land and many of our private parcels are forestlands, therefore the coordinated management of these acres is critical to the long term health of our county and communities. The bark beetle epidemic is currently infesting Delta County and we are working closely with the U.S. Forest Service, timber industry, neighboring counties, and conservation community to bring education and active management to these areas. This act will directly help us with this cooperative approach.

HR 695 provides for coordination among federal land management agencies, governors and county commissioners to address specific areas. This expedited coordination will help local officials and landowners address epidemics early and thus reduce the spread of infestation. The local officials are the most experienced with the problems and therefore the coordination of dollars will be more strategic. In addition, extending stewardship contracting will provide a favorable business climate and sustainability to our struggling timber industry.

The need for targeted restoration and stewardship becomes even more critical, especially as increasing litigation results in no management on federal lands. Federal emphasis on bark beetle epidemic, drought, deteriorating forest health conditions and high risk of wildfires will assist our local U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management agencies, states, counties and landowners to more effectively address the real problems in our forestlands.

We urge Congress to pass and provide funding for H.R. 685.

Respectfully yours,

Board of Delta County Commissioners

J. Mark Roeber, Chairman

C. Doug Atchley, Vice Chairman

C. Bruce Hovde, Commissioner