

# COLORADO TIMBER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

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April 10, 2012

The Honorable Scott Tipton  
United States House of Representatives  
218 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Tipton:

The Colorado Timber Industry Association represents the forest products companies in Colorado, including sawmills, loggers and truckers. We appreciate your leadership regarding H.R. 818, the "Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act", to address forest health issues on federal lands, and we are pleased to support that bill.

Federal lands in Colorado, and much of the rest of the western United States, have been devastated by the ongoing bark beetle epidemics, and millions of acres of those lands are at risk of catastrophic forest fires. The Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management need the ability to streamline their analysis requirements and implement projects on-the-ground more efficiently.

We recognize the importance of reducing the potential for catastrophic fires in the Wildland Urban Interface, however, treatments need to be planned and implemented on a landscape scale. Limiting treatments to the WUI will help protect homes and infrastructure, but will not provide the landscape level treatments needed to address landscape level problems. In addition, WUI treatments do not typically produce sawtimber that is critical to retaining forest products companies.

We strongly support increased use of categorical exclusions. Section 7(f) is a step in the right direction. We recommend expanding CE authorities beyond 500 feet from infrastructure. We also recommend excluding categorical exclusions/Decision Memos from the Appeals Reform Act.

We also strongly support reauthorization of Stewardship Contracting authority, and permanent authorization for Good Neighbor Authority in all States with national forest or Bureau of Land Management lands.

Finally, we are compelled to point out the need for adequate resources. Consistently, the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management have unlimited funds to fight forest fires, but never enough funds to do the preventative work necessary to reduce the potential for catastrophic fires. There is a wealth of research on the benefits of forest management and fuels treatments in reducing the potential for catastrophic fires. Despite the magnitude of the bark beetle epidemics and the increased potential for catastrophic fires, there has been very little additional money directed to the problem and very few additional acres are being treated.

If the goal is to reduce the potential for catastrophic fires, Congress must either increase funding to the agencies or ensure they have the tools to reduce costs and increase efficiency, and then hold them accountable to do so. Nearly \$1 billion of the Forest Service's budget

goes to Cost Pools to fund the Forest Service's overhead expenses. Reducing the cost of overhead expenses in the Washington Office and Regional Offices would be a good first-step toward more on-the-ground management.

Finally, I want to stress the importance of sawtimber, whether lodgepole pine, ponderosa pine, or Engelmann spruce, to sustain the forest products and biomass companies in Colorado and to provide value to offset some or all of the costs of forest management, fuels treatments and biomass removal.

Again, we appreciate your work on this issue, and we look forward to working with you to ensure this bill will increase on-the-ground treatments, reduce the potential for catastrophic fires, and sustain Colorado's forest products industry.

Sincerely,

/s/ ***Carl Spaulding***

Carl Spaulding  
President