



## Board of County Commissioners

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2 April 2013

Congressman Scott Tipton  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Third District, Colorado  
Durango Office  
835 E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 230  
Durango, CO 81301

Dear Representative Tipton:

The Dolores County Board of County Commissioners is extremely pleased with the “*Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2012*”. This letter is intended to show our total support of this proposed act.

Through our coordination meetings with both the Forest Service (FS) and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) we have expressed extreme concern for the health and welfare of our public lands. As we have progressed through Travel Management Plans (TMP) within the county we have mentioned often our concern of miles of road closures and the unavailability to reach dead and dying trees to use for firewood or fuel for campfires. As more and more timber falls victim to beetle kill and drought we see scenic destruction as well as a waste of a natural resource to many who use the public lands for fuel resources to heat their homes. As the local governing body we are responsible for the health safety and welfare of our citizens and the land itself. This act allows local government to help identify high risk areas and initiate emergency mitigation responses to protect human safety, property and infrastructures. As well as wildlife, water resources, scenic beauty, and most importantly a healthy and functioning landscape. We also like the fact that it will expedite projects to help ensure threatened or endangered species habitat.

This bill also addresses a much needed issue involving state and local government powers in regards to federal land management activities. Many counties have been imposed upon by federal land management activities without inclusion in early scoping and planning decisions processes.

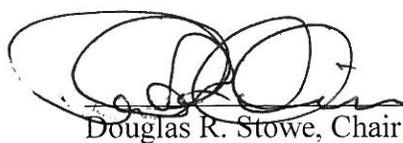
Many counties are experiencing difficult budgetary issues. The costs encumber from fighting a wildfire can easily lead to a monetary burden that will affect both the local federal agencies and the local governments. We know from previous experiences that federal funds are limited and the cost of fighting fires is extremely high. It makes sense as proposed in this bill, to take a proactive

stand in the prevention of fires by keeping our public lands free of any unnecessary fuel resources. Removing dead beetle kill timber will also enhance the under canopy of the landscape and provide vital grasses and other vegetation for both wild and domestic animals. Thusly the landscape will remain free of invasive plant species and their spread to private property and agriculture lands.

We see the *Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act* has a win-win situation as it approaches a reasonable working relationship and coordination process between federal, state and local government. We salute Congressman Tipton for his foresight and action towards such an important legislative exploit.

Sincerely,

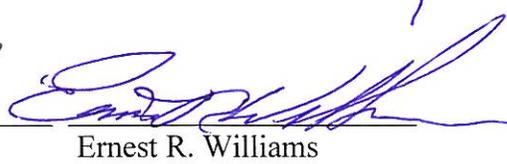
Dolores County Board of County Commissioners



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