



March 17, 2015

The Honorable Scott Tipton
225 North 5th Street, Suite 702
Grand Junction, CO 81501

RE: *Letter of Support from the Garfield County Board of County Commissioners for House Resolution 695 known as the "Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Preservation Act"*

Dear Congressman Tipton,

This letter is offered as a statement of full support for your work regarding H. R. Resolution 695, known as the "Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Preservation Act." As you are aware, Garfield County is comprised of approximately 63% public lands predominantly managed by either the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) or the United State Forest Service with nationally notable areas including the Roan Plateau and the Flat Tops Wilderness Area which are vital public lands that contribute to our livelihoods and economies.

We agree with the important provisions within this legislation that focus efforts to specific challenges on these lands in our county including the bark beetle epidemic that could result in catastrophic wildlife events threatening our communities. While no easy task, we believe these important lands must have the necessary resources to ensure proper management and stewardship for the future. This legislation is a step in the right direction where it places a greater importance on targeted approaches for high risk threat management and then employs the specific state, regional, and local resources to efficiently address that threat. As drought and the beetle epidemic continue in the West, all available resources will continue to be stretched which should underscore the relevance of this legislation.

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.

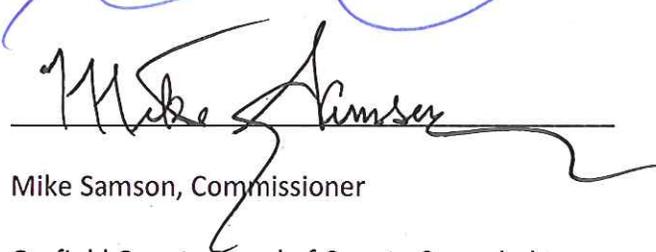
Lastly, Garfield County supports the Act's provisions with regard to extending the duration of stewardship contracts as they can provide a cost effective means of treatment, particularly when commercial harvest is utilized. Thank you for your efforts on this important legislation as well as your other efforts that continue to benefit western slope communities in your district. Do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Very truly yours,



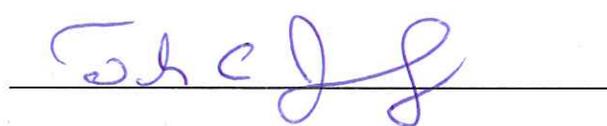
John Martin, Chairman

Garfield County Board of County Commissioners



Mike Samson, Commissioner

Garfield County Board of County Commissioners



Tom Jankovsky, Commissioner

Garfield County Board of County Commissioners

Cc Andrew Gorgey, Garfield County Manager

Frank Hutfless, Garfield County Attorney