



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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March 28, 2013

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

Re: H.R. 818, Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act

Dear Congressman Tipton:

Mesa County citizens' water resources and our collective economic well being will be improved with the passage of the proposed H.R. 818 "Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act." We unanimously support this Act and urge Congress to pass this legislation.

The proposed legislation addresses several critical issues facing public lands in Colorado. Cumbersome management practices have led to issues such as insect infestation and lack of fuels management, creating potential for catastrophic wildfires in the western United States. Ongoing drought amplifies these occurrences.

Mesa County will be greatly affected by wildfires that occur in neighboring counties, including Delta, Montrose, Garfield and Rio Blanco Counties. Wildfires will impact the watershed in the Upper Colorado River Basin, which supplies Mesa County irrigation and domestic water. Additionally, the potential for positive economic impact to surrounding communities, in the form of proactive, contracted treatment, including commercial harvest, guides our county board to support the Act's provisions.

We encourage designation and treatment of high risk forest areas, proactive management and expedited processes for staying ahead of insect infestation and accumulation of fuels in our state forests. The potential of this Act to require all of the above, will improve forest health and reduce detrimental impact to the watershed, all while creating economic opportunity in the Colorado Counties surrounding Mesa County. This is a very positive combination.

We urge Congress to pass H.R. 818 and to provide adequate funding for full and immediate implementation of this legislation. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Board of County Commissioners

Steve Acquafresca, Chair

Rose Pugliese, Commissioner

John Justman, Commissioner

cc: Tom Fisher, Interim County Administrator
Lyle Dechant, County Attorney
Keith Fife, County Long Range Planning Director

Creating a community of opportunities for all residents with a focus on the future.