

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 14, 2013

The Honorable Hal Rogers
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, H-307
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Robert Aderholt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug Administration
Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
2372 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Farr
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural
Development, Food and Drug and
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen and Ranking Members,

As the House Appropriations Committee and specifically, the House Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies, begins consideration of its Fiscal Year 2014 spending bill or any additional spending bills for Fiscal Year 2013, we urge you to include funding for the Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program for Stafford Act designated events that were not funded through the Hurricane Sandy disaster relief bill.

The EWP program, administered by the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), is essential to protecting citizens' safety and helping communities address hazards that represent a substantial risk to life and property, such as water quality degradation, flooding, and road washouts. As you may know, on June 29th, 2012, President Obama declared a major disaster in accordance with section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for the Colorado High Park and Waldo Canyon wildfires.¹ In the aftermath of the fires, El Paso, Larimer, Teller, and Weld counties are confronting challenges including, preventing erosion and stabilizing burned slopes to protect destroying drinking water infrastructure.

Although the Hurricane Sandy disaster relief bill appropriated \$180,000,000 for EWP funding, this funding only assists states impacted by Hurricane Sandy that also were Stafford Act declared disaster areas. As of January 28th, 2013, the NRCS estimates that ten other states are in need of \$48,256,765 in EWP funding for Stafford Act designated events.² Colorado alone needs \$17,530,800 to help communities repair watershed damage caused by the Waldo Canyon and High Park fires. The Senate bill passed on December 28th, 2012, provided EWP funding to all

¹ 42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.

² Not including Hurricane Sandy, Colorado, Arizona, Florida, Louisiana, Minnesota, Mississippi, New York, Tennessee, Utah, and Wisconsin.

states on the waiting list for EWP funding.³ Although \$180,000,000 to fund the EWP program was included in H.R. 152, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, it is our understanding that that money was only eligible for Stafford Act designated events resulting from Hurricane Sandy.

As such, Representative Gardner and Representative Polis introduced an amendment, co-sponsored by Representative Lamborn, Representative Perlmutter, and Representative Tipton, that added \$125,000,000 to the Rogers substitute to H.R. 152 to provide funding for all Stafford Act declared areas in need of EWP funding. At the Rules Committee hearing on Monday, January 14th, 2013, Representatives Polis and Gardner highlighted the need for EWP funding for Colorado communities dealing with the aftermath of the fires. Although both Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Lowey acknowledged during consideration of the bill, the importance of providing EWP funding for other natural disasters, the amendment was unfortunately not included in the House passed Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013.

Last year, \$215,900,000 was appropriated for the EWP program for Stafford Act designated events.⁴ We respectfully request that the House Appropriations Committee again include EWP funding in its annual funding bill in order to help the recovery of communities dealing with the aftermath of natural disasters. We respectfully request that the House Appropriations Subcommittee of Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug and Related Agencies, include at least \$48,256,765 for EWP funding for Stafford Act designated areas in the Fiscal Year 2014 Agriculture Appropriations bill or any additional spending bills for Fiscal Year 2013.

We thank you for consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Cory Gardner
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Scott Tipton
Member of Congress

³ H.R. 1, pg 383 (“For necessary expenses for the “Emergency Watershed Protection Program”, \$125,055,000, to remain available until expended, of which \$77,085,000 is for expenses resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act . . .”).

⁴ Under 125 Stat. 588, “[t]hat there is hereby appropriated for the “Emergency Watershed Protection Program”, for necessary expenses resulting from a major disaster declared pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5121 et seq.), \$215,900,000, to remain available until expended.”



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Mike Coffman
Member of Congress