

October 17, 2011

The Honorable Diana DeGette  
United States House of Representatives  
2335 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0601

The Honorable Jared Polis  
United States House of Representatives  
501 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0602

The Honorable Scott R. Tipton  
United States House of Representatives  
218 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0603

The Honorable Cory Gardner  
United States House of Representatives  
213 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0604

The Honorable Doug Lamborn  
United States House of Representatives  
437 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0605

The Honorable Mike Coffman  
United States House of Representatives  
1222 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0606

The Honorable Ed Perlmutter  
United States House of Representatives  
1221 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515-0607

RE: Legislation to extend Good Neighbor Authority

Dear Members of Congress:

The Water Resources Review Committee is an interim committee of the Colorado General Assembly that is authorized to review water issues and propose legislation related to the conservation, use, development, and financing of Colorado's water resources. As members of this committee, we are committed to the sound stewardship of Colorado's natural resources including its forests. The mountain pine beetle epidemic increased the need for options and policies that will help improve Colorado's forest health. We are writing to urge your support of legislation to extend the Good Neighbor Authority (GNA), which has enabled Colorado to address its significant forest health challenges.

The GNA allows state forestry agencies to act as an agent for federal agencies to complete similar or complementary treatments across state, federal, and private boundaries. This authority was

Senator  
October 17, 2011  
Page 2

successfully piloted in Colorado and Utah. The GNA leverages limited resources for the betterment of healthy forests, especially in the wildland urban interface where the U.S. Forest Service may have limited access to at-risk lands. Work done through this authority has included forest and rangeland restoration, and protection services activities such as insect treatment, hazardous fuels mitigation, and watershed restoration. The GNA may also build upon other cross-boundary opportunities where local interest and support exists.

The GNA is especially important in the western United States due to the significant amount of public lands and near-by communities that are dependent on our forested landscapes. Working across boundaries, in an 'all-lands' approach, will become even more important as forestland becomes more fragmented, land development in the wildland-urban interface increases, and climate change continues to impact our environment. Collaboration across land ownerships, government agencies, and communities is the key to success on the ground.

The intent of the GNA is to allow for complementary forest management projects and activities across public and private lands in the West, and does not bypass federal or state requirements. GNA has been successful in Colorado and we urge your support of legislation to continue this authority as currently written.

Sincerely,

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Senator Gail Schwartz, Chair

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Representative Jerry Sonnenberg, Vice-Chair

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cc: