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## United States Senate

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November 19, 2008

Chief Abigail R. Kimbell  
United States Forest Service  
201 14th Street SW  
Mail Stop 114  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Chief Kimbell:

The recently passed Consolidated Security, Disaster Assistance, and Continuing Appropriations Act, 2009 (Public Law 110-329) includes significant federal funding for wildland fire management under the United States Forest Service. In particular, the law sets aside the following amounts:

- \$175 million for hazardous fuels reduction and hazard mitigation activities in areas at high risk of catastrophic wildfire due to population density and fuel loads, of which \$125 million is available for work on State and private lands using all the authorities available to the Forest Service;
- \$75 million for rehabilitation and restoration of Federal lands which may be transferred to other Forest Service accounts as necessary

With the growing challenges Colorado and our partners in neighboring Western states are facing it is essential that the Forest Service allocate sufficient funds for Region 2. The bark beetle epidemic is continuing to worsen, with projections showing that practically all of Colorado's mature lodgepole pines- 5 million acres of forest- will be dead within five years. Furthermore, local and state governments in the region are working to restore health to forests that are out of balance after more than a century of management that focused almost exclusively on fire suppression. These forest restoration efforts, along with mitigation activities aimed at curbing the bark beetle epidemic, need to be adequately funded in order to reduce short-term and long-term fire risks.

Of the funding in P.L. 110-329 set aside for hazardous fuels reduction and hazard mitigation activities on State and private lands, I believe the Forest Service should prioritize funding for: 1) projects awarded through competitive grants; 2) indirect activities that promote and facilitate fuels mitigation such as biomass programs, hazardous fuel utilization, and marketing, and 3) operational costs. In Colorado, the State should help determine the appropriate allocations of dollars among these priorities in order to maximize the effectiveness of the funding.

Of those dollars set aside for rehabilitation and restoration of Federal lands that may be transferred to other accounts as necessary, I believe the money should be directed towards fuels mitigation or other projects as the State sees fit. In particular, underfunded projects such as transportation and utility corridor treatments would benefit from this allocation.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Salazar". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "K" and a long, sweeping tail on the "z".

Ken Salazar  
United States Senator