

OFFICES:
Gillette 307-682-6268
Cheyenne 307-772-2477
Casper 307-261-6572
Cody 307-527-9444
Jackson 307-739-9507
D.C. 202-224-3424
website enzi.senate.gov

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-5004

MICHAEL ENZI
WYOMING

COMMITTEES:
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October 18, 2007

Chief Gail Kimbell
United States Forest Service
United States Department of Agriculture
14th & Independence, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Kimbell:

You have assumed the position of Chief of the Forest Service at a critical time for our national forests, and, in particular, the national forests in the Rocky Mountain Region. We are writing as the representatives of Colorado, South Dakota and Wyoming because we are all of the opinion that the national forests in the Rocky Mountain Region are not receiving sufficient funding.

The Rocky Mountain Region's forests harbor some of our nation's greatest natural resources. As one of our main sources of wildlife habitat, public recreation, timber, grazing and clean water, these lands directly impact the quality of life that Americans enjoy and the economic livelihood of our communities. Lack of sufficient funding affects every aspect of these resources.

Unfortunately, the insufficient funding for the national forests in the Rocky Mountain Region, this could not be happening at a worse time. Nearly every national forest in the Rocky Mountain Region is experiencing epidemic levels of bark beetle mortality, and many of our constituents understand all too well that our forests are just one lightning strike or careless incident away from a catastrophic fire that threaten each resource.

In a display of true cooperative conservation our private citizens, interest groups, municipalities, counties and states are working to address these issues on lands adjacent to the national forests and are seeking increased levels of activity on adjacent federal lands. According to stakeholders, the Rocky Mountain Region was one of only three Regions to meet timber program targets for FY 2007, while also achieving significant reductions in costs. The Region has outlined a program of work to accomplish even more in FY 2008.

In light of these factors, we urge you to take all necessary steps to ensure that the national forests in the Rocky Mountain Region are funded to their full capabilities for hazardous fuels and forest management programs in FY 08. At a minimum, given the Region's performance and management needs, we would be very concerned by any reductions in

funding or programs from FY 07 levels. Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to continuing this dialogue.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
United States Senator



Mike Enzi
United States Senator



Wayne Allard
United States Senator



John Barrasso
United States Senator



Tim Johnson
United States Senator



John Thune
United States Senator



Barbara Cubin
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John Salazar
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Mark Udall