

Congress of the United States
Washington, D.C. 20510

November 1, 2022

The Honorable Randy Moore
Chief
United States Forest Service
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Chief Moore:

As you know, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Infrastructure Law) and the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) contained over \$10 billion for the U.S. Department of Agriculture to address a backlog of management needs in our forests. Given the critical importance of forest health to Colorado, we write to request additional information about the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) plan to implement this historic and much-needed funding.

In recent years, Colorado has endured the largest and most destructive wildfires on record. As climate change intensifies the frequency and severity of wildfires across the West, it is imperative that the Forest Service move expeditiously to allocate the new funding. The \$10 billion in combined funding from the Infrastructure Law and the IRA represents a historic opportunity to address wildland fire and forest management across jurisdictions, at a scale commensurate with the West's wildfire crisis, through shared priority setting with States, Tribes and other partners.

The USFS has already taken valuable steps to develop a framework for the implementation of these funds. The [10-year strategy](#) USFS released in January helpfully established benchmarks for treated acres and identified priority landscapes for treatment. We also welcomed President Biden's [announcement](#) that the Administration plans to use \$600 million of Infrastructure Law funding to support the wildland firefighting workforce. However, critical details about the timing and specific use of these funds remain undetermined, including the initial \$18 million of Infrastructure Law funds allocated to Colorado. We would appreciate further information on USFS' plans, including answers to the following questions:

1. Methodology used for determining goals for treated acres and High-Risk Firesheds;
2. A comprehensive planning, to include estimated acres analyzed under NEPA, and implementation timeline for the 10-year strategy, including interim milestones;
3. Funding required to implement the 10-year strategy, including any workforce development needs beyond new funding in the Infrastructure Law and IRA;
4. Identification of comprehensive benchmarks of success for forest health, wildfire management, and community safety, extending beyond acres treated;

5. Timing for the identification and prioritization of additional landscapes beyond those identified as [initial landscape investments](#) for treatment, as well as their corresponding funding needs and required NEPA analysis;
6. Clarification of how the USFS plans to analyze, prioritize and treat landscapes that it did not identify as priority firesheds, such as Western Colorado, but that still require critical restoration work; and
7. Avenues for formal consultation and collaboration with State, Tribal, and local governments, as underscored in both laws. Programs like the Good Neighbor Authority and Shared Stewardship Agreements have proven successful and should be used to implement the IRA and Infrastructure Law funds.

We appreciate your leadership in quickly laying the groundwork to allocate the historic new funding for forest health and management in the Infrastructure Law and IRA. We are also pleased that critical forest treatments are underway in the initial landscapes chosen for investment in Colorado. We welcome a meeting with USFS to discuss the issues raised in this letter and request your staff provide quarterly briefings on the implementation of new forest-related provisions in Colorado.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress