



Coalitions & Collaboratives, Inc.

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May 6, 2019

The Honorable Terri Carver
Colorado General Assembly
200 E. Colfax, RM 307
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Ms. Carver:

I apologize for being unable to attend the hearing today, but I am writing today to express our strong support for the Wildfire Mitigation Bill (20-1057). Coalitions & Collaboratives (COCO) works with a number of place-based groups in Colorado that address wildfire issues, such as the Coalition for the Upper South Platte, the Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed, the Arkansas River Watershed Collaborative, the West Region Wildfire Council, and the Spanish Peaks Alliance for Wildfire Protection, Saws & Slaws, and Wildfire Adapted Partnership.

These organizations actively work with community members, local government agencies, and the Colorado State Forest Service to mitigate wildfire risk in their respective locales. Grant programs, such as the Wildfire Risk Reduction Grants are critical to implementing on-the-ground work to reduce the size, scale, and impacts of wildfires. This work is very expensive, and few property owners could afford to do it if they had to bear the full cost. This state funding is highly leveraged with federal funds, and private landowner contributions, to make these projects possible. We know that this type of work does help reduce the impacts of fires, as Cedar Heights showed us during the Waldo Fire; their mitigation is credited with saving homes in the subdivision. Last year was a far less impactful fire year for Colorado than other years in recent history, but we know it is only a matter of time before drought returns, and brings large-scale, high-intensity fires with it. The need to mitigate forests does not go away with the occasional wet year. Please let the House Rural Affairs & Agriculture Committee know that for those of us working in the field, this program is absolutely critical!

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact me. My email address is carol.ekarius@co-co.org, and my cell phone number is 719-439-2268.

I look forward to hearing from you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carol Ekarius'.

Carol Ekarius