



COSTILLA COUNTY
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
"Where Colorado Began"

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February 10, 2020

Representative Terri Carver
Colorado House of Representatives
State Capitol, 200 East Colfax, Room 307
Denver, Colorado 80203

RE: Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation Act

Representative Carver,

Please consider this correspondence as a letter of support for the proposed changes before the committee regarding the Forest Restoration & Wildfire Risk Mitigation Act.

As the Disaster Recovery Manager for Costilla County, I manage the recovery from the disastrous 2018 Spring Fire. The fire consumed 108,045 acres and destroyed more than 200 homes in Costilla and Huerfano Counties. Costilla County alone lost 148 homes, which is approximately 6% of available housing in the county. Recovery is a tedious and costly process that will take years to accomplish in the long-term.

Monies spent on creating healthy forests and reducing wildfire risks will pay substantial dividends across the State. Dollars spent on mitigation efforts dramatically reduces the costs of suppression and ultimately the costs of recovery.

Limited resource areas like Costilla County sometimes find it difficult to fund mitigation efforts, even with the existing 50% match. Reducing the match for smaller jurisdictions, or those who will likely meet the limited resource area criteria will have a substantial impact on the number and size of possible projects. Additionally, adding fire protection districts and non-profits increases the impact across Colorado forests.

Your advocacy on this bill is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully,

Ron Ridley, MS CPM
Spring Fire Disaster Recovery Manager