

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 27, 2022

The Honorable Jeff Merkley  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
531 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
522 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Chair Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As your committee develops its fiscal year (FY) 2023 appropriations bill, we write to request that you fully fund the United States Forest Service (USFS) Water Source Protection Program (WSPP).

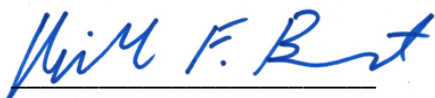
The health of our forests, our watersheds, and our economy are deeply connected. National Forest System lands are the single most important source of water in the country and supply drinking water for close to 20 percent of the entire US population. However many of these watersheds are considered “degraded” and “impaired.”

Congress authorized the Water Source Protection Program in the 2018 Farm Bill to encourage partnerships between agricultural producers, businesses, cities, and the USFS. These partnerships would improve forest health and benefit downstream communities, often bringing in significant new investments from non-federal partners. Despite widespread interest in WSPP across the country, it has not received dedicated funding.

As growing populations and climate change place additional stress on our forests and watersheds, it is critical that Congress invest in programs that support local, collaborative solutions to these challenges. Therefore, we urge you to provide at least \$10 million for WSPP in FY23.

We look forward to working with you on this program.

Sincerely,



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



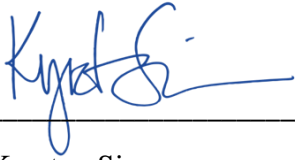
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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Ben Ray Luján  
United States Senator



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Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator