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U.S. SENATOR *for* COLORADO

**Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Act of 2021**

Senator Bennet and Senator Hoeven

In 2014, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership Initiative (Joint Chiefs) to support forest and grassland restoration projects across public and private land. Over the last seven years, the initiative has supported 93 projects in 40 states and Puerto Rico to treat 300,000 acres of hazardous fuels, restore 29,000 acres in priority watersheds, and enhance 200,000 acres of wildlife habitat.

Despite its success, Joint Chiefs has no formal authorization and demand for the program exceeds funding, with less than a quarter of proposed projects funded each year. The Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership Act of 2021 would formally establish the Joint Chiefs at USDA and double funding for the program. It would also outline clear priorities and improve community outreach, transparency, and accountability.

Specifically, the bill would:

- Formally authorize the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership between the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Chief of the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to improve the health and resilience of forest landscapes and grasslands across federal and non-federal land.
- Support voluntary activities and projects across public and private land that reduce wildfire risk, protect water supplies, or improve wildlife habitat for at-risk species.
- Prioritize projects that reduce wildfire risk in municipal watersheds or the wildland-urban interface, are developed through a collaborative process, or increase forest business and workforce opportunities.
- Require the USDA to perform outreach, provide public notice, and make information on the program available to landowners, tribes, states, and local governments.
- Improve accountability by requiring a review of program delivery, data, and outcomes, and establishing annual reporting requirements to Congress.
- Authorize \$90 million annually for the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership, to be split between the USFS (at least 40%) and the NRCS (at least 40%). The remaining funds may also be used for technical assistance, project development, or local capacity.