



February 6, 2023

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Randy Moore
Chief
United States Forest Service
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Chief Moore:

We write today to urge distribution of funding and resources to post-fire recovery needs in Colorado.

We want to thank you for the resources the Department has already dedicated to the East Troublesome and Cameron Peak fires. As you know, these fires decimated the Arapaho and Roosevelt National Forests (ARNF) in 2020 and laid waste to drinking water sources for over a million people. Two years after these megafires burned roughly 400,000 acres of critical watersheds, recovery needs persist. Every time it rains on the burn scars from these fires, the potential for mudslides and flooding risks the life and property of Coloradans nearby or downstream. To better protect these communities, we urge your immediate attention to advance watersheds recovery projects on nearby U.S. Forest Service managed lands.

Late last year, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, Grand County, and the Cities of Greeley and Fort Collins identified a \$228 million funding shortfall for the ARNF, despite a critical and ongoing need for post-fire recovery and long-term rehabilitation to stabilize watersheds and restore ecosystems in the Forest. Insufficient funding halts recovery projects, weakens ecosystems, and threatens public health and safety.

We urge you to prioritize recovery of this watershed and use the Department's authorities to expedite permitting for local partners, so they can implement critical projects this year. It is also imperative that USFS distribute the \$50 million available to Colorado toward recovery efforts on the ARNF as soon as possible to allow projects to move forward.



We request a briefing as soon as possible regarding the funding shortfall for the ARNF. We look forward to hearing from you and working together to help Coloradans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael F. Bennet".

Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jared Polis".

Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Hickenlooper".

John Hickenlooper
U.S. Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joe Neguse".

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

CC:

US Forest Service
Rocky Mountain Region
1617 Cole Boulevard, Building 17
Lakewood, CO 80401