

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, D.C. 20510**

April 29, 2025

The Honorable Brooke Rollins  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretary Rollins:

As you know, the U.S. Forest Service is vital to Colorado and the American West. Our national forests have an extensive backlog of forest health and wildfire prevention needs.

Notwithstanding the Administration's stated intention to exempt firefighters from its layoffs, we wanted to write to make sure you are aware that many Forest Service employees who have been laid off across the West are, in fact, red-card-holding (i.e. critical firefighting) staff. The layoff of red-card holding Forest Service employees has substantially weakened our nation's firefighting workforce.

Red-card-carrying Forest Service staff have the skills, training, and qualifications to support wildfire response (and, indeed, fight wildfires), but hold other full-time jobs at the agency. Red card holders are the backbone of federal firefighting efforts, proving critical support and added capacity when a wildfire breaks out. We estimate, since January, the Forest Service has lost roughly 3,000 red-card holders across the country.

The Forest Service is now entering peak fire season in a compromised position, placing an even greater fire danger on communities across Colorado. The loss of red card holders threatens public safety, undercuts local economies, and undermines years of local wildfire prevention efforts. We urge you to restore the Forest Service red-card holders without delay.

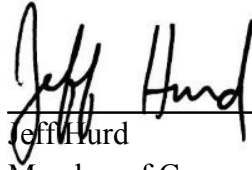
Thank you for your willingness to consider our request. Please call if any of us can provide more useful detail.

Sincerely,



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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



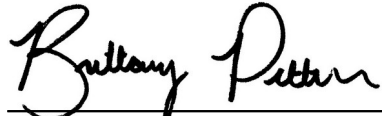
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Jeff Hurd  
Member of Congress



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John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress