



THE SOUTHWESTERN WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Developing and Conserving the Waters in the
SAN JUAN AND DOLORES RIVERS AND THEIR TRIBUTARIES
West Building – 841 East Second Avenue
DURANGO, COLORADO 81301
(970) 247-1302

October 14, 2025

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
SH316 Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for the Fix Our Forests Act (S. 1462/H.R. 471)

Senator Hickenlooper:

On behalf of the Southwestern Water Conservation District (SWCD), I am writing to express our support for the Fix Our Forests Act (S. 1462/H.R. 471). We applaud your leadership in advancing this important bipartisan legislation that addresses forest health, reduces wildfire risk, and safeguards critical water resources across southwest Colorado.

SWCD was created in 1941 by the Colorado General Assembly (C.R.S. § 37-47-101, et seq.). SWCD comprises all or part of nine counties in southwestern Colorado: Archuleta, Dolores, La Plata, Montezuma, San Juan, San Miguel, and parts of Hinsdale, Mineral, and Montrose. SWCD's statutory authority, provided by the General Assembly, is to protect, conserve, use, and develop the water resources of the San Juan and Dolores River Basins for the welfare of our constituents, and safeguard for Colorado all waters to which the state is entitled. Following this mandate, SWCD has assumed a broad strategic role in interstate and intrastate matters on behalf of its diverse constituents for more than 80 years.

It is critical that we work to improve the health of our forested lands in southwest Colorado and protect our communities and watersheds where wildfires have become increasingly devastating and destructive. This legislation outlines a comprehensive approach to improving forest and watershed health by helping to foster a collaborative partnership between federal agencies and local communities, authorizing common-sense environmental streamlining, and expanding important research initiatives.

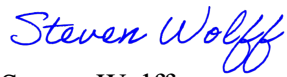
Nearly 90% of the population served by public water systems in the Western U.S. depends on water that originates on federally managed forest lands. When fire removes vegetation and destabilizes soils, runoff from burned areas can overwhelm rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and water

treatment facilities. The Fix Our Forests Act recognizes this connection and makes meaningful reforms to address these risks through proactive management and recovery strategies.

SWCD particularly appreciates your efforts to include additional fire regimes for insect and disease projects. Many Fire Regime Vs are in high-elevation forest types. High elevation wildfires - especially in disease and insect-infested forests - are becoming more common and severe and can have a significant impact on our communities and water systems. Finding a mechanism to allow entities to conduct important mitigation work in these areas is important to many stakeholders in our District.

We respectfully urge swift passage of the bill and stand ready to support its implementation. Thank you again for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,



Steven Wolff,
SWCD General Manager