



TRI-STATE

The Honorable John Hickenlooper
U.S. Senator
120 Constitution Ave NE, Suite SH-316
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Hickenlooper,

On behalf of Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association (Tri-State), thank you for showing continued support for electric cooperatives through your sponsorship of Senate Bill 1462, the Fix Our Forests Act.

Tri-State is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric cooperative that serves 40 distribution cooperative member systems and over 1 million consumers across Colorado, Nebraska, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Your leadership on natural resource issues, particularly those surrounding wildfire, is critically important to Tri-State and the work that we do. As wildfires become more frequent and devastating, electric cooperatives must implement extensive wildfire mitigation plans to provide reliable power and maintain a resilient power system for the rural communities we serve, all while facing high liability risks and an inability to acquire necessary insurance coverage.

The Fix Our Forests Act includes several provisions that would improve Tri-State's ability to complete necessary wildfire mitigation efforts. Key provisions include Section 211, which allows for the management of hazard trees within 150 feet of power lines, and Section 212, which allows utilities to remove dangerous timber and slash from their rights-of-way in national forests without having to carry out an unnecessary and lengthy timber sale. These provisions will make it easier for co-ops to remove trees that pose significant threats to power lines and electrical infrastructure, therefore lowering wildfire risk. Additionally, there are overarching benefits to this bill such as addressing timeline requirements for approving vegetation management plans, establishing programs to help reduce wildfire risks, and strengthening coordination efforts across agencies.

This bill is a key step towards finding solutions in the risky wildfire environment that utilities operate in today. Tri-State and electric cooperatives across the country will benefit from this legislation as it will allow us to complete necessary wildfire mitigation efforts in a more efficient manner and bolster our ability to maintain a resilient power system.

Tri-State is supportive of the Fix Our Forests Act and encourages a continued collaborative effort towards wildfire risk reduction into the future.

Sincerely,

Duane Highley
CEO, Tri-State Generation and Transmission, Inc.