

**November 24, 2020**

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer  
Democratic Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Republican Leader  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

**RE: Coalition Request to Advance Wildfire Legislation**

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader McConnell, Leader Schumer and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of national, state, and local government entities responsible for delivering sustainable water supply and renewable hydropower for millions of citizens and local economies throughout the Western U.S, we write to request your leadership in passing critical forest health legislation to protect communities and the environment from the devastating impacts of wildfire.

As of November 13, the National Interagency Fire Center reported that 49,815 wildfires burned 8,750,197 acres this year in the Western states. This is approximately 2.2 million acres more than the 10-year average for acres burned. National Forest lands are the largest single source of water in the U.S. and in some regions of the West contribute nearly 50% of the overall water supply that supports families, farms, cities, industries, and the economy. The unhealthy state of these forests, which contain some of the nation's most valuable watersheds, increases the threat of catastrophic wildfires.

During the remaining weeks of the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress, we urge your support to enact bipartisan legislation that collectively supports collaborative forest management practices, safeguards communities and critical infrastructure, streamlines review process, and improves forest and watershed health. The combined threat from high-intensity wildfire, drought and extreme weather conditions, and pests and disease has amplified already volatile forest conditions that threaten the environment and our communities in the West.

Several bipartisan bills pending before Congress would provide substantial assistance to enhance forest management and protect communities through a series of activities to advance prevention, preparedness, suppression, and postfire site rehabilitation. The undersigned entities write to urge prompt consideration of legislation to accomplish these important objectives in Western States.

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact David Reynolds with the Association of California Water Agencies at [dlreyns@sso.org](mailto:dlreyns@sso.org) or Ian Lyle with the National Water Resources Association at [ilyle@nwra.org](mailto:ilyle@nwra.org).

Sincerely,

Association of California Water Agencies  
National Water Resources Association  
National Association of Counties  
Family Farm Alliance  
California State Association of Counties  
Western Interstate Region of National  
Association of Counties  
National Forest Counties and Schools  
Coalition  
National Rural Electric Cooperative  
Association  
Rural County Representatives of  
California  
Alaska Municipal League  
Agribusiness and Water Council of  
Arizona  
Salt River Project  
South Tahoe Public Utility District  
Placer County Water Agency  
Coconino County, Arizona

Eagle County, Colorado  
Fresno County, California  
Idaho County, Idaho  
Kern County, California  
Mono County, California  
Tulare County, California  
Malheur County, Oregon  
Madison County, Montana  
Elko County, Nevada  
Iron County, Utah  
Dr. Gina Nikkel, Executive Director,  
Association of Oregon Counties  
Commissioner Donna Beverage, Union  
County, Oregon  
Commissioner Greg Chilcott, Ravalli  
County, Montana  
Supervisor Woody Cline, Gila County,  
Arizona  
Commissioner Clint Farlee, Ziebach  
County, South Dakota

CC:

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
Senator Kamala Harris  
Senator Steve Daines  
Representative Jared Huffman  
Representative Doug LaMalfa  
Representative Tom McClintock  
Representative Bruce Westerman  
Representative Jimmy Panetta  
California Congressional Delegation