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COLORADO

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June 21, 2006

Undersecretary Mark Rey
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Undersecretary Rey,

In the spring of 2006, the Forest Service, at the urging of the Colorado delegation allocated an additional \$500,000 to Colorado to address the threats to our forests from drought, insect infestation, and hazardous fuels accumulation. This pro-active move by the Forest Service was positively viewed in Colorado and I am, again, writing to urge you to provide additional funding to United States Forest Service (USFS) hazardous fuels and forest health projects in the State of Colorado during the current fiscal year.

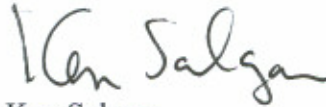
Persistent drought and a devastating bark beetle infestation are escalating already dangerous fire conditions across the state. According to the U.S Drought Monitor a majority of Colorado is considered to be in a severe or extreme drought situation. The bark beetle infestation in northern Colorado is advancing each month, building ever-greater fuel loads among houses and structures. Smaller outbreaks on Colorado's Front Range, an expansive wildland-urban interface, will create even more hazardous conditions if left untreated.

The need for hazard fuels reduction and forest health treatment could not be more urgent, we are falling further and further behind in our efforts to treat the forest. At the FY06 budget levels, Colorado will receive anywhere between 35,000 and 83,000 acres of fuels treatment. However, Colorado currently has 280,000 acres approved for treatments and 235,000 additional acres in the approval process. 65% of this acreage is in the critical wildland-urban interface.

Recognizing the increasingly desperate situation that our local communities are facing, unique collaborations are being created among local communities, the Forest Service, and the State of Colorado. These collaborations are working together to prioritize areas for treatment, lower the costs for those treatments, and to address the associated impacts of the drought and beetle epidemic. These collaborations are pro-actively working to

address this situation and I assure you that any additional funding that is sent to Colorado to assist in the ongoing efforts will be a wise investment in our national forest system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ken Salazar". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "K" and "S".

Ken Salazar
United States Senator

CC: Secretary Mark Johanns, USDA
Chief Dale Bosworth, United States Forest Service