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NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

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Committee Approves Bill to Help Prevent Catastrophic Wildfires, Improve Forest Health, Protect Local Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, the House Natural Resources Committee passed [H.R. 6089](#), the *Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2012*, with a [bipartisan vote of 28-19](#). Introduced by Colorado Members Scott Tipton, Doug Lamborn, Mike Coffman, and Cory Gardner, the bill would reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires, address factors that contribute to insect infestation, and restore forest health by prioritizing and implementing hazardous fuels reduction projects on federal land.

“Mismanagement of our public lands has fostered unhealthy, unnatural forests and contributed to the buildup of hazardous fuels that intensify wildfires, contribute to the spread of insect infestation, and risk the health of the environment, water supplies, and surrounding communities. I commend the Colorado delegation for putting forward legislation that will allow States and the federal government to work together to prioritize and expedite wildfire prevention projects so that we can improve forest health and reduce the risk of destructive wildfires,” **said Natural Resources Chairman Doc Hastings (WA-04).**

The *Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act of 2012* would authorize both the Governor of a State and the Secretary of Agriculture or Interior to designate areas of federal land that are at high-risk of catastrophic wildfire. The Governor or Secretary then may propose expedited forest management projects relating to hazardous fuel reduction, forest health, and economic development to address threats to forest health, public safety, and wildlife habitat presented by the risk of wildfire on public lands.

“With increased local control, states can better protect their communities, species habitats, water supplies, and natural areas with preventative action to mitigate the conditions that lead to unhealthy forests and devastating wildfires. This legislation aims to restore forests to healthy conditions, curbing the spread of bark beetle, protecting the natural environment, and limiting the dangerous conditions that have fueled our state’s most devastating wildfires. Additionally, it upholds all valid and existing rights on applicable lands and preserves the current protection framework for wilderness areas and national monuments,” **said Rep. Scott Tipton (CO-03).**

“The deadly Waldo Canyon Fire makes clear we can and must do more to prevent wildfires. This bill replaces outdated forest management regulations with smarter, more effective tools to ensure the public’s safety. I believe healthy forest management is everyone’s responsibility. This bill would give those who live in and near our national forests a greater voice in those

plans,” said Rep. Doug Lamborn (CO-05).

“Over the past several months, destructive wildfires have showed how urgent the need is for a change in the way we manage our national forest lands. I am pleased to join my colleagues from Colorado and the Committee on Natural Resources in supporting the Healthy Forest Management and Wildfire Prevention Act. We have to allow our communities to move away from dangerous prescribed burns, and this bill will give local officials more forest management tools to better mitigate the risk of out of control wildfires. This is crucial to saving our forests and our communities from devastating wildfires,” **said Rep. Mike Coffman (CO-06).**

“The damage caused by the recent wildfires in Colorado was no doubt magnified by the beetle-kill epidemic, which provided plenty of fuel for the flames. In order to move forward, it is essential that we better manage the health of our forests. Congressman Tipton's Healthy Forest Management Act puts in place a plan that will accomplish just that, and I am proud to support him in this effort,” **said Rep. Cory Gardner (CO-04).**

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