



On Monday, June 9, Rep. Scott Tipton was joined by Colorado colleagues Reps. Doug Lamborn, Mike Coffman and Cory Gardner in introducing a bill to increase local control over forest management and wildfire prevention. The Healthy Forest Management Act of 2012 follows a Congressional hearing on forest management held in Montrose, Colorado in May at the request of Tipton and Coffman.

The bill increases state control over forest management decisions in high-risk areas on National Forest Service lands and lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management. By allowing governors, in consultation with county commissioners from affected counties as well as affected Indian tribes, to designate high-risk areas and develop emergency hazardous fuels reduction projects for those areas, states can better protect their communities, species habitats, water supplies, and natural areas, and help ameliorate those conditions that lead to unhealthy forests and wildfires.

“Wildfire has taken a devastating toll on communities, the environment, wildlife habitats, and water supplies in Colorado and across the Western United States. This legislation treats the bark beetle epidemic, drought and other conditions that have made our forests highly susceptible to wildfire as the emergency that it is. By allowing states to play a larger role in addressing this emergency, we can more proactively manage our forests, prevent future destruction from wildfires, and promote a healthy natural environment.” said Scott Tipton.

“The 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 This bill replaces outdated forest management regulations with smarter, more effective tools to ensure the public’s safety.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.” noted Doug Lamborn.

“This summer has been a wakeup call for Members of Congress as it has become beyond clear that Western communities need as many forest management tools as we can give in order to

mitigate the risk of out of control wildfires. This legislation will give more authority for state and local officials to manage federal forest lands and establish effective hazardous fuel reduction projects. That will be crucial to saving our forests and our communities from devastating wildfires.” said Mike Coffman.

In addition to providing states with increased discretion over the management of lands within their borders, the Healthy Forest Management Act would allow treatment projects to move forward under the streamlined review processes set forth in the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003. The Healthy Forest Management Act protects all valid and existing rights on applicable lands and preserves the current protection framework for Wilderness Areas and National Monuments.

Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ) is also an original co-sponsor of the bill.

By: [Pagosa Daily Post](#)
Published July 11, 2012