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**To:** <OurFutureSummit@aol.com>  
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**Subject:** FYI regarding bark beetle funding



## U.S. Senator Ken Salazar

*Member of the Agriculture, Energy and Veterans Affairs Committees*

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### **Sen. Salazar Fights Fifty Percent Funding Cuts To Bark Beetle Management Programs**

Washington, D.C. – Today, in a hearing of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Senator Salazar questioned Department of Agriculture Undersecretary Mark Rey and United States Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth about the drastic 48 percent cut to bark beetle management funds in this year's budget. In 2004 alone, a total of 7 million trees covering over 1.5 million acres were killed by bark beetles throughout Colorado.

According to the USFS' own budget justification in 2005 the USFS conducted prioritized bark beetle prevention, suppression and restoration projects on 76,444 acres of federal land and 152,226 acres of cooperative lands (State, County, Private). In FY 2007 that would drop to 44,331 acres of federal land (a drop of 42%) and 60,589 acres of cooperative lands (State, County, Private) (a drop of 60%)

**Senator Salazar stated, "Bark beetles are a major threat to forests in Colorado. Their affect on rural landscapes and communities is devastating; and beetle kills only exacerbate the fire danger in our state. We need to do more, not less and a nearly fifty percent cut to this program nationally is not a good start."**

In the hearing, Chief Bosworth acknowledged the "significant infestation" in Colorado and the west and spoke about how the USFS is working with local communities. Last year, Senator Salazar successfully passed an amendment to the FY 06 Agriculture Appropriations bill mandating the USFS lay out summary of Bark Beetle Management and its affect on local communities.

**"We must do everything we can to protect the rural communities near these bark beetle infestations, and that means fully funding bark beetle management and fire mitigation programs. I will continue to work with my colleagues to increase funding in the Interior Appropriations for Wildland Fire Management to protect our Colorado communities from**

**fires. In addition, we can turn some of the infected timber into useful energy by pursuing investments in biomass energy technologies and operations.”**

Over the last several years, bark beetle infestations have become a major issue nationwide. Bark Beetles have adversely impacted forests from the Southeastern United States to the Pacific Northwest. Beetle infestations are a natural part of forest ecology and tend to peak every 20 years or so. The current Colorado infestation is unnaturally large due to drought, 100 years of fire suppression, and climate change. The most significant infestations are found in the North Central and Southwest parts of the state. The beetles are spreading, however, into the Front Range.

Severely impacted Colorado counties include: Grand, Jackson, Routt, Summit, Eagle, Park, Chaffee, Pitkin, Saguache, Gunnison, Hinsdale, San Miguel, Ouray, Delta, Montrose, Mesa and Garfield.

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