

ALLARD URGES FOREST SERVICE SEND EMERGENCY FIRE PREVENTION FUNDING TO PARCHED COLORADO

Allard Hand Delivers Request to Forest Service Chief at Senate Hearing

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Wayne Allard (R-Colorado) on Wednesday urged U.S. Forest Service Chief Dale Bosworth to reprogram funds in the agency's 2006 budget and make them available to Colorado so that state and federal officials can take steps to prevent forest fires before the upcoming fire season. Allard made his request at a Senate Hearing and in a letter to head of the Forest Service.

“The desperate situation we are facing in Colorado requires swift action,” Senator Allard said in a letter to Chief Bosworth. “A formula for a potential disaster is in the making if we do not get the resources we need to perform fire mitigation.”

“Severe drought continues to plague parts of Western Colorado, and this, combined with the mammoth infestation of the bark beetle, has created a tinder box waiting to go up in flames,” said Senator Allard. “The bark beetle has destroyed more than 1.5 million acres and more than 7.4 million trees throughout Colorado.”

“This, in addition to 6.3 million acres of hazardous fuels currently awaiting treatment, creates a formula for potential disaster,” Senator Allard wrote. “We now are in a position to take steps to help avert this potential disaster before it starts. I hope that you are able to join me and the people of Colorado as we work to avoid another disastrous fire season.”

“I can assure you that Colorado is poised to use any funding made available. The Forest Service has conducted an excellent assessment of the problem on state and federal lands, has identified the highest priority areas for treatment, and has completed ...documentation for more than 800,000 acres,” Senator Allard wrote. “In addition there are currently 13 communities throughout the state that have completed community wildfire protection plans as recommended... We are ready to act; we only need the funds to implement this plan.”