



Senate Local Government Committee  
Colorado General Assembly  
200 East Colfax Avenue  
Denver, CO 80203

May 18, 2021

**Re: Support for SB21-258 - Wildfire Risk Mitigation**

Chair Ginal, Vice Chair Story, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for taking the time to review SB21-258, which proposes investments in a variety of wildfire risk mitigation programs, as well as updates to those programs to make them more accessible and effective. Western Resource Advocates (WRA) is pleased to support this legislation and we encourage committee members to vote in unanimous support of SB21-258 and the opportunities it would present for wildfire risk mitigation and job creation in communities across the state.

As our climate changes, drought intensifies and the wildland-urban interface expands, the risk of catastrophic wildfire that threatens lives will only continue to increase. Colorado must make significant investments now to improve forest and watershed health and reduce wildfire risk to communities. The Wildfire Mitigation Capacity Development Fund proposed by SB21-258 would make just such an investment in wildfire mitigation projects and we encourage the committee to support this funding.

Importantly, in addition to directly funding project implementation, the Wildfire Mitigation Capacity Development Fund would also provide needed and forward-thinking investment in risk analysis, workforce development, cross-boundary collaboration, and planning. Funding for this type of work is sorely needed and we strongly support these elements of the proposed fund.

SB21-258 also proposes investments in existing programs and updates to make those programs that would encourage better cross-boundary collaboration, support more planning and community engagement, and provide more permanent jobs to support program implementation. These changes would help ensure that funds are being used thoughtfully and that communities have options to implement the highest priority projects.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written comments on SB21-258. WRA urges you to support this legislation to mitigate wildfire risk and create jobs in communities across Colorado.

Sincerely,

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Western Resource Advocates

*Western Resource Advocates is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting the West's land, air, and water to ensure that vibrant communities and agriculture exist in balance with nature.*

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