



## ***21<sup>ST</sup> Century Conservation Corps for Our Health and Our Jobs Act***

The impacts of COVID-19 on our health and our economy, combined with high levels of drought throughout the West, create unprecedented wildland firefighting challenges in 2020 and may hurt numerous rural communities and economies across the country. Those who are at increased risk for adverse health effects due to wildfire smoke exposure -- people who suffer from heart or lung diseases, like asthma -- now suffer additional risks of being particularly vulnerable to COVID-19.

Rural communities, already living with the threat of wildfire, are experiencing unique threats to their people and economies during the pandemic. The crisis has quickly brought the outdoor economy to a halt. Many forest workers, despite their essential work, were laid off and others, like outfitters and guides, are losing work during their busy season. Mountain towns that rely on tourism from visits to ski areas and public lands are now facing unprecedented loss in revenue.

As Congress considers future COVID-related stimulus legislation, it must include federal support for wildfire prevention and preparedness to protect the health and safety of communities, as well as relief and job creation measures for rural economies that rely on public lands and outdoor recreation. In a time when the livelihood of rural communities is the line, we must make bold investments in the programs that underpin both our health and our local economies.

### ***Congressman Neguse's 21st Century Conservation Corps for Our Health and Our Jobs Act:***

- Establishes a \$7 billion relief fund to help outfitters and guides who hold U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Department of the Interior special use permits – and their employees – stay afloat through the truncated recreation season;
- Establishes a \$9 billion fund for qualified land and conservation corps to increase job training and hiring, helping to restore public lands and watersheds, while providing important public health related jobs in this time of need;
- Provides \$6 billion for U.S. Forest Service and \$6 billion for the National Park Service maintenance accounts to both create jobs and reduce the maintenance backlog on National Forest System and National Park System lands;
- Provides \$4 billion in National Forest Funding to make needed investments in landscape-scale restoration projects to improve forest health and reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire;
- Provides \$600 million for the Forest Service State and Private Forestry program, including \$200 million for programs such as Firewise which helps local governments plan for and reduce wildfire risks;
- Provides \$100 million for land management agencies to purchase and provide personal protective equipment (PPE) to their employees, contractors and service workers;
- Increases access to public lands through expanding and investing in programs like Every Kid Outdoors and the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership; and
- Provides temporary fee waivers for ski areas and public land use permit holders to aid in economic recovery.