

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 1, 2024

The Honorable Mike Simpson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

We are writing to request that the Subcommittee include no less than \$7.5 million in FY25 to support the important services of the three Southwest Ecological Restoration Institutes (SWERI) authorized by Congress in PL 108-317 at \$15 million annually.


The work of the SWERIs are critical for reducing the threat of wildfire to communities, forests, and watersheds in the West. The three institutes – the Colorado Forest Restoration Institute (CFRI) at Colorado State University, the Ecological Restoration Institute (ERI) at Northern Arizona University, and the New Mexico Forest and Watershed Restoration Institute (NMFWRI) at New Mexico Highlands University – mobilize practical forest restoration and fuels reduction science and technical services for application by land management agencies and stakeholders who care about the future of our Nation’s forests and water supplies.

The SWERIs provide value to the federal government by applying research and service to prevent destructive wildfires, restore forest health, safeguard water supplies, and create forest sector jobs, as well as develop methods and tools that can be applied nationally. The Institutes develop, translate, and transfer information to achieve land management goals through a combination of institute-specific projects, as well as projects undertaken collaboratively among the three institutes. In addition, each institute leverages state and external grants to expand its impact.

A funding level of \$7.5 million in FY25 will allow the SWERIs to sustain parity in funding at \$2.5 million per institute, while expanding programs to accelerate science-based solutions to reduce the threat of wildfire—the importance of which is underscored by recent uncharacteristic fire seasons and ongoing drought in the West. This funding level will further allow the SWERIs to deepen local connections and extend capacity to assist managers throughout the West.


The SWERIs are important, effective, and making a difference for land managers and communities. Their work reducing the threat of wildfire saves taxpayer dollars and lives. 2024 marks the 20-year anniversary of the SWERIs, and we are glad to support a program that has continued to provide a significant return on investment since its creation. We greatly appreciate their work and urge you to support this request on behalf of our communities.

Sincerely,




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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



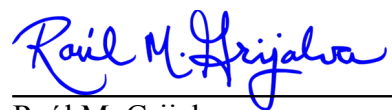
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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress




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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress



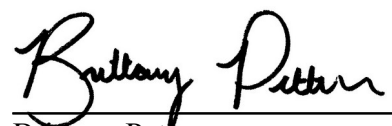
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
Member of Congress




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Teresa Leger Fernández  
Member of Congress




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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



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Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



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Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress