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## **Congressional Appropriators Urged to Use "Carryover" Fire Suppression Funds to Restore Diseased Forests, Reduce Severe Fire Risks**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 10, 2011

**DENVER** -- Western governors called on Congress today to direct unused, carryover fire suppression funding for the nation's forests toward restoration efforts that would address the growing risks and threats posed by wildfires.

The Western Governors' Association made the request in a letter sent today to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Signing on behalf of their colleagues were Govs. C.L. "Butch" Otter (Idaho), WGA Chairman; Christine Gregoire (Wash.), WGA Vice Chair; and John Hickenlooper (Colo.), WGA Co-lead for Forest Health.

"On behalf of Western governors we write to request your assistance and support for allocating funding in the current fiscal cycle to address the risks and threats posed by the millions of acres of trees killed by various insects and diseases within our National Forests-in some cases, these have reached epidemic, unprecedented proportions," the governors said.

They said they appreciate earlier efforts by the Appropriation Committees to fund much needed restoration work in the many insect- and disease-impacted forests, but more needs to be done.

"We request that every effort be made immediately to apply any unused carryover fire suppression funding to expand and accelerate that restoration work," the governors said. "We believe the condition of our forests warrant preventive action given the scale of this emergency situation.

"While it's critical to address the federal deficit, and we don't want to get in the way of serious bipartisan efforts to do that, it's frankly penny-wise and dollar foolish to cut back on or fail to robustly fund restoration efforts for insect and disease mitigation in the West. We are risking a far higher cost in dollars, property and lives if we fail to address the threats and risks of an unfortunate catastrophic fire season."

A copy of the letter and more information about WGA's forest health program can be found at [www.westgov.org](http://www.westgov.org).

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