



WESTERN GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION

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March 22, 2011

The Honorable Ken Salazar
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W., Room 6151
Washington, DC 20240

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretaries Salazar & Vilsack:

Congratulations on the successful completion of Phase 1 of the new National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and Federal Land Assistance and Management Enhancement Report to Congress. By building upon the successful collaborative model of the 10 Year Comprehensive Strategy and recognizing the shared responsibilities as outlined in the foundational documents, as determined by the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, we believe you have achieved a solid first step toward a truly national cohesive wildland fire strategy.

Although there have been challenges throughout the process of developing these two documents, we recognize several very important components to this successful achievement as noted below:

- Commitment of all participants and recognition of all stakeholders
- Increased understanding of shared responsibilities
- Dedication to working through difficulties
- Incorporation of management and restoration for resilient landscapes, which are important to reducing risks to communities
- Involvement of local expertise with regional strategy committees

We look forward to being involved in the important next phase on Regional Assessments and Strategies. Western Governors and the members of our Forest Health Advisory Committee are ready to engage with the Regional Strategy Committee for the Western region. Western Governors recently adopted a policy urging a focus on large scale forest restoration. We encourage you to incorporate this information as you work through evaluation of Western assessments and the development of successful strategies.

Sincerely,

C.L. "Butch" Otter
Governor of Idaho
Chairman

Christine O. Gregoire
Governor of Washington
Vice Chair

John Hickenlooper
Governor of Colorado
Forest Health Co-lead Governor