



## NEWS RELEASE

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### Colorado Lawmakers Pay Tribute to Importance of Forest Health

**DENVER – May 10, 2018** – On behalf of the state’s Forest Health Advisory Council, the Colorado House of Representatives has passed a formal tribute recognizing the importance of forest health to the citizens of Colorado. Introduced Friday by Reps. Marc Catlin and Jeni Arndt, the bipartisan tribute emphasizes the need for sound stewardship of the nearly 25 million acres of forestland in Colorado.

The Forest Health Advisory Council was created in 2016 to provide a collaborative forum to advise the Colorado State Forester on a range of issues, opportunities and threats with regard to the state’s forests. The council is administered by the Colorado State Forest Service and consists of 21 members representing the interests of a broad group of stakeholders connected to Colorado’s forests – and a collective need to keep them healthy – including: sportsman’s organizations, wood products businesses, private landowners, public utilities, conservation organizations, municipal drinking water agencies, economic development agencies and environmental organizations. The council is chaired by State Forester Mike Lester.

“No matter where you live in the State, forest stewardship provides direct benefits to Colorado’s citizens that are important to be recognized,” Catlin said. “Wildfires have devastating effects on local communities, and by managing our forests for these events before they occur, forestry agencies are protecting these communities and their economies.”

More than 2.2 million people live in Colorado’s wildland-urban interface, and Lester asserts that forest health treatments and active management help to reduce the risks of wildfire and to protect human life, property and critical infrastructure.

Healthy forests also are necessary for clean and robust water supplies. Water derived from Colorado’s mountain forests is utilized by everyone and everything in the state, from municipalities to farmers and ranchers and from fisheries to wildlife.

Several of the Advisory Council’s members represent recreational interests, with recreation in the state’s vast forested settings being a significant driver of tourism revenue. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, outdoor recreation accounts for \$28 billion in consumer spending annually in Colorado, as well as 229,000 jobs and \$9.7 billion in wages and salaries.

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*The Colorado State Forest Service (CSFS) provides professional forestry assistance, wildfire mitigation expertise and outreach and education to help landowners and communities achieve their forest management goals. The CSFS is a service and outreach agency of the Warner College of Natural Resources at Colorado State University and provides staffing for the Division of Forestry within the Colorado Department of Natural Resources. For more information, visit [csfs.colostate.edu](http://csfs.colostate.edu).*