



## Eastern Sierra Council of Governments

February 26, 2025

The Honorable Representative Kevin Kiley  
United States House of Representatives  
2445 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Federal Funding for Critical Wildfire Projects

Dear Congressman Kiley,

On behalf of the Eastern Sierra Council of Governments (ESCOG), I am writing to express our deep concerns regarding the uncertainties surrounding federal funding for wildfire resiliency projects. As we know from the fires in Los Angeles, fire resiliency is critical. These uncertainties significantly hinder our ability to plan and implement critical initiatives designed to protect our communities, forests, and local economies from the growing threat of catastrophic wildfires.

Wildfire mitigation and resiliency are central programs within ESCOG, and our regional partners rely on funding from federal agencies such as the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Department of Energy (DOE), and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to carry out our work. The ESCOG has worked diligently to expand local capacity to support necessary wildfire mitigation treatments on federal Forest Service lands over the past five years. The unpredictable nature of these funding sources creates challenges for long-term planning, workforce retention, and the timely execution of vital projects. Without stable and consistent funding, we face delays in implementing forest thinning, prescribed burns, and other critical land management strategies that reduce wildfire risk.

Federal investment in wildfire resiliency is essential not only for environmental conservation but also for the economic well-being of our region. The Eastern Sierra's tourism, outdoor recreation, and agricultural sectors all depend on healthy landscapes and functioning ecosystems. When wildfire mitigation efforts are underfunded or delayed, our communities bear the economic and ecological consequences of more frequent and severe wildfires.

We urge you to advocate for stable and sustained funding streams for wildfire resiliency efforts in the Eastern Sierra. Specifically, we request your support in

securing already awarded grant funds that directly impact our ability to protect our region. Additionally, we encourage the exploration of legislative measures that would provide multi-year funding commitments, reducing uncertainty and enhancing our capacity to plan for long-term wildfire resilience.

We appreciate your leadership and commitment to addressing the wildfire crisis in California. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and explore ways to ensure that federal resources effectively support our local wildfire resiliency efforts. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can provide additional information or collaborate on solutions.

Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to your support in safeguarding the Eastern Sierra from the increasing threat of wildfires.

Sincerely,

Stephen Muchovej  
Chair, Eastern Sierra Council of Governments