

DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Fire Chief, Randy Black

103 Sheppard Drive | Durango, Colorado 81303
970.382.6036 Fax 970.382.6018
durangofire.org | @DurangoFire



March 24, 2026

The Honorable Michael Bennet

United States Senator, Colorado
261 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable John Hickenlooper

United States Senator, Colorado
374 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Hickenlooper and Senator Bennet,

On behalf of the Durango Fire Protection District Board of Directors, I am writing to express our strong support for Congressional Directed Spending to establish a regional wildfire response base in La Plata County.

Wildfire risk in Southwest Colorado continues to intensify due to prolonged drought conditions, increased fuel loads, and expanding development in the wildland-urban interface. These factors place our communities, critical infrastructure, and natural resources at heightened and sustained risk. Strengthening our regional wildfire response capacity is no longer optional—it is essential.

The proposed regional wildfire base is strategically located in what we consider the most advantageous site in the county. Its central positioning provides efficient, rapid access to all districts, jurisdictions, and neighboring counties. This level of accessibility will significantly improve coordination and response times for initial attack and extended operations across the region.

This facility will serve as a critical hub for multi-agency collaboration, supporting operations among federal, state, Tribal, and local partners, including the U.S. Forest Service, the Colorado Division of Fire Prevention and Control, the Southern Ute Indian Tribe's wildfire management agency, and local wildfire response units. By co-locating resources and enhancing logistical capabilities, the base will foster stronger interagency coordination and more effective deployment of personnel and equipment.

Investing in this regional base will directly expand our capacity to prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfires. It will also improve firefighter safety, increase operational efficiency, and ensure that our region is better equipped to meet both current and future wildfire threats.

DURANGO FIRE PROTECTION DISTRICT

Fire Chief, Randy Black

103 Sheppard Drive | Durango, Colorado 81303

970.382.6036 Fax 970.382.6018

durangofire.org | [@DurangoFire](https://twitter.com/DurangoFire)



We respectfully urge your support for this Congressional Directed Spending request. This investment will provide long-term benefits to the people, landscapes, and economies of Southwest Colorado, and represents a proactive step toward safeguarding our communities.

Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to wildfire resilience in Colorado. We appreciate your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "KB", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Karen Barger, President
Durango Fire Protection District
Board of Directors