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Paul C. Johnson, PhD
President and Professor

Congressman Ed Perlmutter
1226 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Subject: Colorado School of Mines Support for H.R. 5781, the National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program Act

Dear Congressman Perlmutter

Thank you for your leadership in developing the National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program Act, together with your co-sponsors of this important legislation, Representatives Zoe Lofgren, Jerry McNerney, Suzanne Bonamici, Eddie Bernice Johnson, Brad Sherman, Janet Napolitano, Jared Huffman, Eleanor Holmes Norton, Deborah Ross, Earl Blumenauer, Ami Bera, and others.

The United States has experienced significant wildfire seasons, which have ravaged parts of the Western U.S., including Colorado, resulting in major losses of life and property. These events have substantial and lasting economic impacts for our nation, together with health and environmental consequences, and through dislocations affecting our citizens, commerce, natural resources, wildlife and entire ecosystems.

This proposed legislation builds upon the successful models that established the National Windstorm Impact Reduction Program (NWIRP) and the National Earthquake Hazard Reduction Program (NEHRP) in law through PL 114-52, PL 108-360, and the prior PL 95-124. These highly effective Interagency Coordinating Committees are both led by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), with the participation of OSTP, OMB and the appropriate partner federal agencies for science, technology, emergency preparedness and response. The coordinated efforts through NEHRP and NWIRP across government over the years have already led to dramatic improvements in building codes and standards, early warning systems, and enhanced approaches to community resilience, all supported by scientific understanding and the development of advanced technologies.

Through the enactment of this proposed legislation, Congress will continue to support a whole of government approach in coordinating and providing proven leadership effectiveness to the challenges of wildfire risk reduction. The nation's scientific agencies must work together with partner agencies to improve preparedness, response, and resilience to wildfires across the country. The development of shared resources, test beds, predictive models and systems will further enhance efficiency in resource utilization across government, and by engaging partners including academia and first responders in addressing this national priority.

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The **National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program** is being established with a proven model of interagency collaboration led by NIST. We are confident in the track record of this approach, which will enable achieving major measurable reductions in the losses of life and property from wildland fires. This proposed legislation will stimulate and accelerate research to improve the understanding and prediction of fires and their impacts on forest lands. With substantial portions of housing and business established at the wildland-urban interface, this work will further inform building codes and standards, community planning, warning and forecast systems for citizens and first responders, and will improve community preparedness and resilience.

We at Colorado School of Mines are grateful for your efforts together with co-sponsors of this important legislation. We look forward to broad support for this key and timely proposal, and for the adoption of the **National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program Act**.

Sincerely yours,

Paul C. Johnson, Ph.D.
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President and Professor