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Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee

Support SB26-089 Recreate Wildfire Matters Interim Committee (AML Cutter, Senator Baisley & Representative Velasco)

Good Afternoon Chair Roberts, Vice Chair Danielson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Brendan Witt and I am a policy advisor at Western Resource Advocates (WRA), an organization that has worked to ensure our communities thrive in balance with nature for more than 30 years. WRA is writing in support of SB26-089 to ensure that legislative consideration is given to policies that will improve wildfire resilience for Colorado's communities and ecosystems in the years ahead. We are grateful to Assistant Majority Leader Cutter and Senator Baisley for bringing this bill forward.

The threat of unnaturally severe and destructive wildfire is now a year-round concern for communities across our state. Through the Wildfire Matters Review Committee, legislators have the opportunity to dedicate time and capacity toward exploring and understanding the dynamics that drive unnaturally severe wildfires, the role of beneficial fire in Colorado's ecosystems, and the potential polices to help bolster wildfire resilience for people and our environment across the state.

SB26-089 is crucial to ensure that the Wildfire Matters Review Committee is reestablished, and legislators are able to continue the important, bipartisan work it fosters advancing policies that help Colorado work towards a more fire-adapted future.

As factors such as worsening drought, expanding development in the wildland urban interface, resurgent beetle kill epidemics, and the impacts of climate change continue to increase the risk of unnatural severe and destructive megafires, the work of the Wildfire Matters Review Committee is as important and as pertinent to the wellbeing of Coloradan's as it has ever been. For these reasons, we feel it is essential that the committee vote to advance SB26-089 and recreate the Wildfire Matters Review Committee with a new sunset through 2031.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. We urge you to vote "yes" on SB26-089.

Sincerely,
Brendan Witt
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