



January 23, 2026

Dear Representative Ezell and Chairwoman Hageman,

Thank you for your attention and the opportunity to provide my testimony to the Subcommittee on Water, Wildlife, and Fisheries oversight Hearing. It was truly an honor and privilege to address you and the subcommittee.

Regarding your question on the Timber Production Expansion Program (TPEP), while we support the intent behind the TPEP program and recognize its potential benefit in other states, Colorado likely will not benefit from such assistance. Ultimately, TPEP participation in Colorado will likely be hindered by the unsuitability of Colorado wood products and the locational economics that limit sawmill expansion in our state.

A vast majority of Colorado's Front Range, and the areas of the greatest wildfire risk, do not produce viable wood products for industry utilization. Our Rocky Mountain forests are comprised of low-value wood. This wood is only economically viable as alternate lumber products, such as chip board, pellet wood for heat, or other non-saw log material. Facilities that produce these products require significant investments and infrastructure to support and sustain production and much of the merchantable products that could be used do not meet the quota requirements or sustainability metrics needed. Recognizing these limitations, biochar has been highly discussed in Colorado, however, given the low market demand for this product, only a few biochar facilities have been successful and sustainable.

Additionally, Colorado's geographic terrain makes it challenging to transport merchantable wood products significant distances, due to mountain passes, weather limitations, and increasing costs of labor and fuel. These higher hauling costs quickly diminish the value of Colorado-sourced wood. Further, we have been informed by some of the largest sawmills that the challenging mountainous locations, the costs to purchase land, and the minimal value of the specific species composition of the material being harvested makes the business less economically sustainable and therefore not realistic to pursue a large production facility in Colorado.

However, Colorado has experienced success in the Wood Innovations Program Grants¹ to help with the transportation and subsidy for wood product utilization. Specifically, this funding program has been utilized in recent years to help off-set the haul costs of transporting timber to local sawmills. Some local logging contractors were successful in obtaining this funding to aid their operations, which in turn aids the efforts of the land managers removing the fire-prone timber from the landscape.

If there are additional questions or discussion, I would be happy to meet or discuss further.

Respectfully,

Travas Deal
Chief Executive Officer

¹ USDA Forest Service, Wood Innovations Program Grants, US Department of Agriculture; [Wood Innovations Program Grants | US Forest Service](#)