



CITY OF FLAGSTAFF

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

211 West Aspen Avenue, Flagstaff, Arizona 86001

Main Line: 928-213-2000

Website: <https://www.flagstaff.az.gov>

September 21, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Mr. Randy Moore
Chief, USDA Forest Service
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20227

Dear Secretary Vilsack and Chief Moore,

The recent United States Forest Service (USFS) announcement that the Four Forest Restoration Initiative's Phase Two Request for Proposals (RFP) is not able to issue an award is an unfortunate delay. There is an urgent need to scale up restoration-based wood product utilization and prescribed fire operations across northern Arizona to reduce wildfire impacts to communities.

A significant lesson learned from the 2012 Four Forest Restoration Initiative's initial RFP award was that a large, long term contract does not guarantee wildfire risk reduction across the landscape. Nine years later, the evidence is clear that existing federal contracting processes and traditional timber industry-based business models are not in alignment with the landscape-scale implementation needs of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative.

The City of Flagstaff is committed to goals of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative and to collaborative efforts to develop alternative contracting methods, effective fire management partnerships and innovative restoration-based wood utilization models that value the lessons learned from 2012 and 2021. Additional efforts the City has made to invest in wildfire risk reduction include the City's Wildland Fire Management Program, which focuses on wildfire prevention, preparedness, mitigation, response and recovery and the Flagstaff Watershed Protection project, for which 74% of Flagstaff voters approved a \$10 million bond to help reduce the risk of devastating wildfire and post-fire flooding.

The City of Flagstaff would welcome a visit from USFS officials to Arizona to meet with stakeholders of the Four Forest Restoration Initiative and learn more about the need for the project. The City also requests that USFS produce a timeline outlining how the Initiative will be advanced in the future.

Sincerely,



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