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June 10, 2026

The Honorable Mike Lee
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Natural
Resources
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman, Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Tree Care Industry Association (TCIA), I write in support of S. 140, the Wildfire Prevention Act of 2025. TCIA supports the bill's goal of expanding and accelerating wildfire-mitigation activities on federal lands. TCIA's members perform much of the vegetation management that reduces wildfire ignition risk along the utility rights-of-way crossing those lands, and S. 140 would strengthen their ability to carry out that work.

TCIA represents approximately 1,400 businesses nationwide that engage in commercial tree care, providing services to residential communities, state and local governments, commercial businesses, and utilities. Our members play a vital role in wildfire prevention by identifying and mitigating hazardous vegetation near utility infrastructure, maintaining rights-of-way, and creating defensible spaces that reduce the likelihood of ignition.

Qualified utility vegetation management (UVM) companies increasingly face rising insurance premiums, shrinking coverage, and legal uncertainty in high-risk wildfire areas. Part of that uncertainty arises because the responsibilities of contractors are not always clearly distinguished under existing law, leaving companies exposed to wildfire litigation even where fault is unclear or absent. As a result, many qualified contractors are declining wildfire-mitigation work or withdrawing from projects where exposure cannot be reasonably insured. Without a stable, qualified UVM workforce, the expanded authorities in S. 140 cannot be carried out at the scale and pace the wildfire threat demands.

S. 140 expands the vegetation management authorities under Section 512 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act, enabling the removal of hazard trees that pose wildfire risk to powerlines crossing federal lands. As it does so, TCIA appreciates the inclusion of language clarifying that vegetation-management contractors are not treated as "owners" or "operators" for purposes of legal responsibility under Section 512. Section 512 assigns responsibilities—such as developing and submitting vegetation-management plans and holding the underlying federal authorization—that are carried out by the permit holder, while contractors perform the approved work in the field. Clarifying this distinction provides certainty for UVM contractors, reduces insurance-related barriers, and supports the stable workforce essential to achieving the bill's wildfire-mitigation goals.

TCIA appreciates the Committee's leadership and urges the Committee to advance S. 140. We look forward to continuing to work with the Committee and stakeholders to ensure these authorities can be carried out effectively in the field.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David White". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and a stylized "W".

David White, CAE
President & CEO, TCIA