



U.S. SENATOR MARK UDALL

Armed Services, Energy and Natural Resources, and Intelligence Committees

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Udall Thanks U.S. Forest Service for Heeding His Calls to Aggressively Augment Air Tanker Fleet

Udall Has Led Push to Strengthen Federal Firefighting Fleet, Protect Colorado Communities from Wildfire

Mark Udall, who [has led the fight to strengthen the federal firefighting tanker fleet](#), thanked [the U.S. Forest Service for heeding his call to aggressively augment its air tanker fleet ahead of the 2014 wildfire season](#). Udall [pressed the U.S. Forest Service and private contractors earlier this year](#) to ensure the agency has the next-generation air tankers it needs to protect lives, homes and watersheds.

"Wildfire threatens Colorado's water, communities and special way of life. That's why I have fought for years to ensure the U.S. Forest Service and Colorado firefighting agencies have the tools they need, including modern air tankers, to contain blazes before they become mega-fires," **Udall said**. "I am proud the U.S. Forest Service has heeded my calls to aggressively augment its air tanker fleet, but we need to stay vigilant. I will continue to work with the Forest Service, military and Colorado agencies to ensure we leverage every resource possible to protect Coloradans' homes and lives."

Udall's comments follow the U.S. Forest Service's moves to secure a series of one-year tanker contracts to complement its current air tanker fleet, which includes older-model aircraft and several next-generation air tankers.

Udall, who serves on the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, has been a relentless advocate for Colorado communities facing the threat of catastrophic mega-fires. He has [pressed the military to elevate the readiness status of its aerial firefighting assets — C-130s equipped with Modular Airborne Fire Fighting Systems](#). He also [recently urged the U.S. Forest Service to quickly adopt the Government Accountability Office's recommendations on how to upgrade its air tanker fleet](#).

Udall has [championed common-sense programs and strategies to prevent Western wildfires](#). He recently [introduced bipartisan legislation to allow the Federal Emergency Management Agency to proactively work with states and localities on wildfire mitigation projects](#). He also has been a [tireless advocate to encourage homeowners to prepare their homes for wildfire](#), including clearing fuels from around their homes and making a plan for what to do if faced with an imminent wildfire.

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