

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 24, 2021

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Merkley and Ranking Member Murkowski:

As you develop the Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22) Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you continue to provide strong support for wildfire suppression and forest management funding.

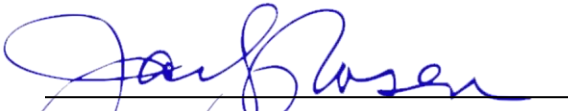
Wildfires affect a growing number of states in the West each year, and fire-fighting expenses incurred by federal land management agencies often exceed \$1 billion annually. Fires pose a threat to human health, personal property, wildlife, and our public lands. In 2020, nearly 60,000 wildfires burned more than 10.3 million acres and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. The federal responsibility for wildfire suppression and management is critical to protecting lives, property, and natural resources on public lands. With jurisdiction over the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS), U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (FWS), and the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), the Department of Interior (DOI) is responsible for managing over 500 million acres of land, including wildfire monitoring and suppression. Additionally, the Forest Service (USFS), located within the Department of Agriculture (USDA), oversees wildfire response to 193 million acres of the National Forest System.

We appreciate your continued prioritization of wildfire management funds in the recent appropriations packages. The Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 (P.L. 115-141) provided a budget cap adjustment for wildfire suppression costs that included forest management reforms. In FY2020, USDA and DOI received over \$6 billion for wildfire suppression and management, including \$2.25 billion through the wildfire adjustment that Congressional negotiators agreed to during the FY2018 appropriations process. Over 90% of the West is currently experiencing drought, with the majority of areas subject to significantly below-average precipitation and extended dry periods. Unfortunately, this means that this wildfire season will likely once again be catastrophic.

Therefore, we request that you continue to pursue robust funding for strategies and resources pertaining to wildfire management in FY2022.

Thank you for your consideration.


Sincerely,




Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



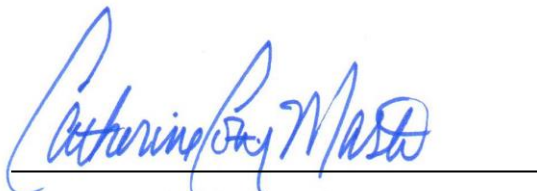
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