

PARTNER CAUCUS on FIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDING SOLUTIONS

APRIL 26, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary of the Interior

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture

The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
Office of Management & Budget

Dear Secretary Zinke, Secretary Perdue, Director Mulvaney,

The undersigned organizations represent the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, comprised of a diverse group of international, national, and local organizations. The caucus seeks a comprehensive solution to the wildfire suppression funding issue. We urge the new administration to address the budgeting problem associated with federal wildfire suppression by supporting a comprehensive fire funding solution that solves the borrowing issue *and* the erosion of budgets due to increasing wildfire suppression costs.

In January 2009, our diverse coalition of organizations came together to find a solution to the repeated fire transfers, and corresponding reductions to other agency programs – many of which reduce long-term fire risk. The Partner Caucus represents a diverse set of international, national and local organizations interested in sustainable land management on private, tribal, municipal, state, and federal lands.

Critical landscape management activities, longer fire seasons, increased development in the wildland-urban interface, and millions of acres of forests with fuel loads exceeding the historic range of variability are among the many factors contributing to increased costs of wildfire response in the United States. This creates a crippling burden on the Department of the Interior and the USDA Forest Service's land management functions as they shift resources to fund essential suppression activities – effectively delaying and terminating projects that improve forest resilience and help to reduce wildfire risk. In the last several years more than fifty percent of the Forest Service's budget has been consumed by fighting wildfires. Consequently, landscape management has been negatively impacted across all lands including national forests and on DOI lands, such as our national parks, *and* state and private lands.

Many proposals of the past few years would ban the practice of transferring additional funds when appropriated funding is spent, but that is only a partial fix in addressing the impacts from rising wildland firefighting costs. These proposals do not address the larger problem of

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shifting funding from non-fire programs to fire programs, which results from the way firefighting funds are calculated, budgeted, and allocated. As that ten-year average is used to calculate suppression increases, and as budgets remain relatively flat, less is available for forest management and restoration, research, recreation, and other critical private and public land objectives.

A comprehensive fire funding fix would 1) address the continued erosion of agency budgets that results from the increasing ten-year average, and stabilize the level of funding for suppression within the agencies; 2) access disaster funding for extraordinarily costly fires, including those that may be calculated as part of the ten-year average; and 3) significantly reduce the need to transfer from non-suppression accounts and programs. We recommend any fire funding proposal that meets the above criteria, for example, as proposed in the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. Additionally, we support accountability measures to ensure cost containment.

Thank you for your consideration and for addressing this important discussion of wildfire suppression funding challenges. It is critical that the administration and Congress act this year to solve this critical issue. We look forward to continuing to work together to come to a comprehensive solution.

Sincerely,

Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding
Solution

For information regarding this letter or members of the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, please contact Cecilia Clavet, cclavet@tnc.org, 703-841-7425.

List of 138 Partner Caucus Signers:

1. ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES
2. ALLIANCE OF LANDOWNER ASSOCIATIONS
3. AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB
4. AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION
5. AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION
6. AMERICAN FORESTS
7. AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY
8. AMERICAN YOUTHWORKS
9. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
10. APPLGATE PARTNERSHIP AND WATERSHED COUNCIL
11. ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION
12. ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS
13. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF AMERICA
14. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NC
15. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF PISGAH
16. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF WNC
17. BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE
18. BLUE GOOSE ALLIANCE
19. BLUE MOUNTAIN COMMUNITY RENEWAL COUNCIL
20. BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PARTNERS
21. BLUE RIDGE FIRE DISTRICT
22. BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB

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23. CALIFORNIA CENTER FOR RURAL POLICY
24. CALIFORNIA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION
25. CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
26. CALIFORNIA SKI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
27. CALIFORNIA URBAN FORESTS COUNCIL
28. CENTER FOR INVASIVE SPECIES PREVENTION
29. CENTRAL IDAHO RANGELANDS NETWORK
30. CENTRAL SIERRA ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCE CENTER
31. CHOOSE OUTDOORS
32. COLORADO FOREST RESTORATION INSTITUTE
33. COLORADO YOUTH CORPS ASSOCIATION
34. CONSERVATION CORPS MINNESOTA & IOWA
35. CONSERVATION LEGACY
36. CONSERVATION NORTHWEST
37. DAHL ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, LLC
38. DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE
39. ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE
40. ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY STUDY INSTITUTE
41. FLATHEAD ECONOMIC POLICY CENTER
42. FOREST FIRE LOOKOUT ASSOCIATION
43. FOREST STEWARDS GUILD
44. FORESTRY ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH CAROLINA
45. FRAMING OUR COMMUNITY
46. GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
47. GREAT APPALACHIAN VALLEY CONSERVATION CORPS
48. GREAT OLD BROADS FOR WILDERNESS
49. GREATER FLAGSTAFF FORESTS PARTNERSHIP
50. GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION
51. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CENTER INC.
52. HEADWATERS MONTANA, INC.
53. HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
54. IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
55. IDAHO FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
56. IDAHO FOREST RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP
57. INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WILDLAND FIRE
58. IRON TRIANGLE LLC
59. KS WILD
60. LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES INITIATIVE
61. LASSEN FOREST PRESERVATION GROUP
62. LOUISIANA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
63. MARKIT! FORESTRY MANAGEMENT
64. MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION COMMISSIONS
65. MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION
66. MATTOLE RESTORATION COUNCIL
67. MID KLAMATH WATERSHED COUNCIL
68. MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS
69. MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
70. MOTTEK CONSULTING
71. MOUNTAINTRUE
72. MT. TAYLOR MANUFACTURING
73. MULE DEER FOUNDATION
74. NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF FOREST OWNERS
75. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
76. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES
77. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
78. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY FOREST RESOURCES PROGRAMS

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79. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
80. NATIONAL FOREST HOMEOWNERS
81. NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
82. NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION
83. NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
84. NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
85. NEW MEXICO FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
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89. OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
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92. PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION
93. PLJ ENTERPRISES
94. PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE
95. PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION
96. QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION
97. QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
98. ROCKY MOUNTAIN YOUTH CORPS
99. ROOT CAUSE
100. RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY
101. SALMON VALLEY STEWARDSHIP
102. SIERRA BUSINESS COUNCIL
103. SIERRA CLUB
104. SIERRA FOREST LEGACY
105. SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY
106. SIUSLAW INSTITUTE
107. SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS
108. SOUTHEAST CONSERVATION CORPS
109. SOUTHERN OREGON CLIMATE ACTION
110. SOUTHERN OREGON FOREST RESTORATION COLLABORATIVE
111. SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS
112. SPATIAL INTEREST, LLC
113. STEWARDS
114. STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
115. SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST
116. SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORESTS COALITION
117. SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS
118. THE CALIFORNIA URBAN FORESTS COUNCIL
119. THE CONSERVATION FUND
120. THE CORPS NETWORK
121. THE LANDS COUNCIL
122. THE MOUNTAIN PACT
123. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
124. THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND
125. THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
126. THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
127. THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP
128. TULEYOME
129. UTAH CONSERVATION CORPS
130. VAIL RESORTS
131. VERMONT WOODLAND ASSOCIATION
132. VIRGINIA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
133. WALLOWA RESOURCES
134. WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE
135. WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION
136. WATERSHED RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER
137. WILDLIFE MISSISSIPPI
138. WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION INC.