

PARTNER CAUCUS on FIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDING SOLUTIONS

FEBRUARY 10, 2014

Dear Members of Congress:

For years the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) have “robbed from Peter to pay Paul,” by transferring money out of vital agency programs and services in order to fund wildfire suppression costs. This practice is negatively affecting land management programs including those that decrease long-term wildfire risk and costs.

The Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions believes that the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, S. 1875 and H.R. 3992, offers a promising approach to managing emergency wildfire suppression costs without impacting other priority programs within the responsible agencies. This bill would fund a portion of the USFS and DOI wildfire suppression costs through a budget cap adjustment similar to the budget cap adjustment currently in use by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. This bill will not change federal fire suppression policies or strategies and will not change the cost of fire suppression, and thus will have a neutral impact on federal spending and the federal budget deficit. The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act would provide a reliable funding structure, consistent with that used by other agencies responding to natural disaster emergencies. The act will enable the agencies to meet their land management and emergency response objectives.

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 the repeated need to transfer funds from non-fire programs to pay for wildfire suppression. In January 2009, a 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 forest management on private, tribal, municipal, state, and federal lands.

Critical landscape management activities are often postponed or canceled as a result of fire transfers from non-suppression agency accounts once annual wildfire suppression funds are depleted. For example, the USFS wildfire management activities (the largest component of which is suppression) rose from 13 percent of the agency’s FY 1991 budget to nearly 50 percent over the last several fiscal years. 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.

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As we continue to experience longer fire seasons, the practice of transferring funds from non-fire programs to pay for emergency wildfire response will continue unless Congress adopts the solution proffered by the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. The federal agencies responsible for managing wildfires and public lands must be armed with the tools and resources that will enable them to succeed. The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act is a critically important to ensure the long-term health and sustainability of our nation's forests.

We respectfully urge you to support the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, S. 1875 and H.R. 3992.

Sincerely,

3 LEGS COLLABORATION SERVICES
ALAMO NAVAJO SCHOOL BOARD, INC.
ALLEGHENY HARDWOOD UTILIZATION GROUP
ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES
AMERICAN BIRD CONSERVANCY
AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION
AMERICAN FOREST & PAPER ASSOCIATION
AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION
AMERICAN FOREST RESOURCE COUNCIL
AMERICAN FORESTS
AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY
AMERICAN LOGGERS COUNCIL
APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
APPLEGATE PARTNERSHIP AND WATERSHED COUNCIL
ARID LAND INNOVATION
ARIZONA PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL
ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
ASSOCIATION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE AGENCIES
ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL GRASSLANDS
BLACK HILLS FOREST RESOURCE ASSOCIATION
BLACK HILLS REGIONAL MULTIPLE USE COALITION
BLACK HILLS RESOURCE, CONSERVATION, AND DEVELOPMENT
BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PARTNERS
BRL LOGGING
CALIFORNIA FIRE SAFE COUNCIL
CALIFORNIA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
CALIFORNIA SKI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION

For information regarding this letter or members of the Fire Suppression Funding Solutions Partner Caucus, please contact Cecilia Clavet, cclavevt@mc.org, 703-841-7429.

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CENTRAL OREGON INTERGOVERNMENTAL COUNCIL
CHOOSE OUTDOORS
CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL
COLORADO TIMBER INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
CONGRESSIONAL SPORTSMEN'S FOUNDATION
CONSERVATION NORTHWEST
CRILEY CONSULTING
DEFENDERS OF WILDLIFE
EASTERN ARIZONA COUNTIES ORGANIZATION
ECOSYSTEM WORKFORCE PROGRAM
EL TESORO RETREAT CENTER
ENDANGERED SPECIES COALITION
ESTRADA COLLABORATIVE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, LLC
FEDERAL FOREST RESOURCE COALITION
FIREFIGHTERS UNITED FOR SAFETY, ETHICS, AND ECOLOGY (FUSEE)
FLAGSTAFF FIRE DEPARTMENT
FLATHEAD ECONOMIC POLICY CENTER
FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY
FOREST BUSINESS NETWORK
FOREST ENERGY CORPORATION
FOREST GUILD
FOUR FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVE COLLABORATIVE STAKEHOLDER GROUP (4FRI)
FOURTH SECTOR STRATEGIES
FRAMING OUR COMMUNITY, INC.
FRIENDS OF THE URBAN FOREST
FUTURE FOREST, LLC
GILA TREE THINNERS
GILA WOODNET
GLOBAL PARKS
GRASSROOTS OUTDOOR ALLIANCE
GREAT LAKES TIMBER PROFESSIONALS ASSOCIATION
GREAT OLD BROADS FOR WILDERNESS
GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION
HAWKS ALOFT, INC.
IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
IDAHO FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
ILLINOIS FIREFIGHTERS ASSOCIATION
INDIANA FORESTRY & WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
INTERMOUNTAIN FOREST ASSOCIATION

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INTERMOUNTAIN ROUNDWOOD ASSOCIATION
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS
INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION
INTERTRIBAL TIMBER COUNCIL
JARA LAND WORKS
KHII RADIO
LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES INITIATIVE
LEMHI COUNTY
LITTLE COLORADO RIVER PLATEAU RESOURCE CONSERVATION AND DEVELOPMENT AREA
MAINLAND PLANNING, INC.
MASTERS OF FOXHOUNDS ASSOCIATION
MCCUTCHANVILLE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
MID KLAMATH WATERSHED COUNCIL
MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
MONTANA WOOD PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
MOTTEK CONSULTING
MOUNTAIN STATES LUMBER AND BUILDING MATERIAL DEALERS ASSOCIATION
MT. ADAMS RESOURCE STEWARDS
MT. TAYLOR MACHINE, LLC
NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF FOREST OWNERS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY FOREST RESOURCES PROGRAMS
NATIONAL CATTLEMEN'S BEEF ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL NETWORK OF FOREST PRACTITIONERS
NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION
NATIONAL VOLUNTEER FIRE COUNCIL
NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION
NATIONAL WILDFIRE INSTITUTE
NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNERS
NEW MEXICO FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
NEW MEXICO PRESCRIBED FIRE COUNCIL
NEW MEXICO STATE LAND OFFICE
NORTHBROOK PUBLIC WORKS
NORTHERN ARIZONA WOOD PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
NORTHWEST CONNECTIONS

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NORTHWEST FOREST WORKER CENTER
OUTDOOR ALLIANCE
OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
PINCHOT INSTITUTE
PUBLIC LANDS COUNCIL
PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION
QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION
QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
RESTORATION TECHNOLOGIES
ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION
RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY
RURAL COUNTY REPRESENTATIVES OF CALIFORNIA
SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL
SALMON VALLEY STEWARDSHIP
SAN JUAN WATERSHED WOODY-INVASIVES INITIATIVE
SIERRA CLUB
SIERRA FOREST LEGACY
SIUSLAW INSTITUTE
SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS
SOUTH DAKOTA ATV/UTV ASSOCIATION
SOUTH DAKOTA CAMPGROUND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER
SOUTHERN OREGON FOREST RESTORATION COLLABORATIVE
SOUTHERN OREGON TIMBER INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
SOUTHWEST FORESTS SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP
SPATIAL INTEREST, LLC
SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST
SWAN ECOSYSTEM CENTER
TAOS COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORP
TELLER COUNTY HOME BUILDERS ASSOCIATION
THE FOREST GUILD
THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RV PARKS AND CAMPGROUNDS
THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND
THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
TIERRA Y MONTES SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
TREE MUSKETEERS
TROUT UNLIMITED

PARTNER CAUCUS on FIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDING SOLUTIONS

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TWIN WILLOWS RANCH
UTE MOUNTAINEER
VAIL RESORTS
VILLAGE OF TAOS SKI VALLEY
WALLOWA RESOURCES
WASHINGTON STATE FIRE FIGHTERS' ASSOCIATION
WATERSHED RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER
WEST RANGE RECLAMATION, LLC
WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER
WILDEARTH GUARDIANS
WILDLIFE FOREVER
WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE
WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION INC.
WYOMING MINING ASSOCIATION
WYOMING STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION
ZUNI MOUNTAIN FOREST COLLABORATIVE