Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Leader Schumer, and Leader Pelosi:

The undersigned organizations represent the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions. The Partner Caucus seeks a comprehensive solution to the wildfire suppression funding issue that addresses the borrowing issue and the erosion of budgets due to increasing wildfire suppression costs. We urge Congress to support the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (WDFA) (H.R. 2862; S. 1842), a bipartisan bill that solves this critical issue.

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.

Longer fire seasons, increased development in the wildland-urban interface, and millions of acres of forests with increased fuel loads 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 (DOI) and the USDA Forest Service’s (U.S. Forest Service) land management functions as the agencies shift resources to fund essential suppression activities – effectively delaying and terminating projects that improve forest resilience and reduce wildfire risk. In the last several years, more than 50 percent of the U.S. Forest Service’s budget has been consumed by fighting wildfires. Consequently, landscape management has been negatively impacted across all lands including national forests and DOI lands, such as our national parks and state and private lands.

Many proposals in past years would ban the practice of transferring additional funds when appropriated funding is spent, but that is only a partial fix for addressing the impacts of rising wildland firefighting costs. These proposals do not address the larger problem of wildfire suppression costs consuming greater portions of the U.S. Forest Service budget over time. As the 10-year average that is used to calculate suppression costs increases, and as budgets remain relatively flat, funding is being shifted from non-fire programs to pay for fire. This results in fewer dollars 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 10-year average and stabilize the level of funding for suppression within the agencies, 2) access disaster funding for extraordinarily costly fires, and 3) significantly reduce the need to transfer from non-suppression accounts and programs. The WDFA satisfies these three criteria by funding fire suppression in the U.S. Forest Service and
DOI budgets at the 10-year average from 2015 and then providing access to disaster funding through a budget cap adjustment for levels beyond that amount. Freezing the 10-year average offers agencies and land managers more predictable and consistent budgets as they try to implement and execute successful programs and projects that benefit forests and communities across the United States.

We urge you to support the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act. It is imperative that Congress take action this year to solve this critical issue, and the Partner Caucus stands ready to work with you and your colleagues toward this goal.

Sincerely,

Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions

List of 204 Partner Caucus Signers:

1. ACCESS FUND
2. ALASKA WILDERNESS LEAGUE
3. ALLEGHENY HARDWOOD UTILIZATION GROUP, INC.
4. ALLIANCE FOR COMMUNITY TREES
5. ALLIANCE OF LANDOWNER ASSOCIATIONS
6. AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB
7. AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION
8. AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION
9. AMERICAN FORESTS
10. AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY
11. AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CONSULTING ARBORISTS
12. AMERICAN SPORTFISHING ASSOCIATION
13. AMERICAN WHITEWATER
14. AMERICAN WOODCOCK SOCIETY
15. AMERICAN YOUTHWORKS
16. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
17. APPELGATE PARTNERSHIP AND WATERSHED COUNCIL
18. ARBOR DAY FOUNDATION
19. ARID LAND INNOVATION
20. ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS
21. ARIZONA TRAIL ASSOCIATION
22. ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES
23. AUDUBON WASHINGTON
24. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF AMERICA
25. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NORTH CAROLINA
26. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA
27. BLACKFOOT CHALLENGE
28. BLUE GOOSE ALLIANCE
29. BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PARTNERS
30. BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB
31. Boulder County, CO
32. BRL Logging
33. California Conservation Corps
34. California Farm Bureau Federation
35. California Native Plant Society
36. California Ski Industry Association
37. California Urban Forests Council
38. Carolina Climbers Coalition
39. Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation
40. Central Idaho Rangelands Network
41. Choose Outdoors
42. Chumstick Wildfire Stewardship Coalition
43. City of Ashland, OR
44. Clackamas County, OR
45. Clearwater Resource Council
46. Colorado Mountain Club
47. Colorado Youth Corps Association
48. Connecticut Forest & Park Association
49. Conservation Lands Foundation
50. Conservation Legacy
51. Conservation Northwest
52. CT Bioenergy Consulting
53. Defenders of Wildlife
54. Delaware Nature Society
55. Delta Waterfowl
56. Ecosystem Management Research Institute
57. Ecosystem Workforce Program
58. El Sendero Backcountry Ski and Snowshoe Club
59. Environmental and Energy Study Institute
60. Evergreen Mountain Bike Alliance
61. Flathead Economic Policy Center
62. Florida Wildlife Federation
63. Forest Business Network
64. Forest Fire Lookout Association
65. Forest Landowners Association
66. Forest Stewards Guild
67. Four Forest Restoration Initiative, AZ
68. Framing Our Community
69. Friends of Bell Meadow
70. Friends of the Inyo
71. Friends of the Urban Forest
72. Georgia ForestWatch
73. Georgia Wildlife Federation
74. Gila Tree Thinners
75. GREAT APPALACHIAN VALLEY CONSERVATION CORPS
76. GREAT BASIN INSTITUTE
77. GREAT OLD BROADS FOR WILDERNESS
78. GREATER FLAGSTAFF FORESTS PARTNERSHIP
79. GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION
80. GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE CENTER INC.
81. HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
82. IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
83. IDAHO FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
84. ILLINOIS VALLEY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
85. INDIANA FORESTRY & WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
86. INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FIRE FIGHTERS (IAFF)
87. INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF WILDLAND FIRE
88. INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION
89. KS WILD
90. LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES INITIATIVE
91. LASSEN FOREST PRESERVATION GROUP
92. LEWIS AND CLARK TRUST, INC.
93. LITTLE BEAR FOREST REFORM COALITION
94. LITTLE COLORADO RIVER PLATEAU RC&D AREA, INC.
95. LOMAKATSI RESTORATION PROJECT
96. LOS PADRES FORESTWATCH
97. LOUISIANA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
98. MAZAMAS
99. MICHAEL T. RAINS CONSULTING
100. MICHIGAN SNOWSPORTS INDUSTRIES ASSOCIATION
101. MINNESOTA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
102. MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS
103. MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
104. MONTANA WOOD PRODUCTS ASSOCIATION
105. MOUNTAIN HIGH RESORT
106. NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF FOREST OWNERS
107. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES
108. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RV PARKS & CAMPGROUNDS
109. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
110. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY FOREST RESOURCES PROGRAMS
111. NATIONAL DEER ALLIANCE
112. NATIONAL FOREST HOMEOWNERS
113. NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
114. NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION
115. NATIONAL WILDFIRE INSTITUTE
116. NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION
117. NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
118. NATURAL RESOURCES COUNCIL OF MAINE
119. NEW HAMPSHIRE AUDUBON
120. NEW JERSEY AUDUBON
121. NEZ PERCE TRAIL FOUNDATION
122. NORTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
123. NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON FOREST HEALTH COLLABORATIVE
124. NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL ASSOCIATION
125. NORTHERN FOREST CENTER
126. NORTHWEST YOUTH CORPS
127. OKANOGAN CONSERVATION DISTRICT
128. OLD WOOD LLC
129. OUTDOOR ALLIANCE
130. OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
131. PACIFIC CREST TRAIL ASSOCIATION
132. PACIFIC NORTHWEST SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION
133. PALMETTO AGribusiness COUNCIL
134. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
135. PHEASANTS FOREVER & QUAIL FOREVER
136. PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION
137. PLJ SERVICES LLC
138. PORTNEUF RESOURCE COUNCIL
139. PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE
140. PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION
141. PUBLIC LANDS INTERPRETIVE ASSOCIATION
142. PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIP
143. QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION
144. QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
145. REI Co-op
146. ROCKY MOUNTAIN ELK FOUNDATION
147. ROCKY MOUNTAIN RECREATION INITIATIVE
148. ROOT CAUSE
149. RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY
150. SALMON VALLEY STEWARDSHIP
151. SAN JUAN CITIZENS ALLIANCE
152. SAN LUIS VALLEY ECOSYSTEM COUNCIL
153. SAVE THE REDWOODS LEAGUE
154. SIERRA BUSINESS COUNCIL
155. SIERRA CLUB
156. SIERRA FOREST LEGACY
157. SIERRA INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND THE ENVIRONMENT
158. SITKA CONSERVATION SOCIETY
159. SIUSLAW INSTITUTE
160. SKI UTAH
161. SOCIETY FOR THE PROTECTION OF NH FORESTS
162. SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS
163. SOUTH CAROLINA WILDLIFE FEDERATION
164. SOUTHEAST CONSERVATION CORPS
165. SOUTHERN OREGON CLIMATE ACTION NOW
166. SOUTHERN OREGON FOREST RESTORATION COLLABORATIVE
167. SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS
168. SOUTHWEST SUSTAINABLE FOREST PARTNERSHIP
169. SPATIAL INTEREST, LLC
170. STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
171. SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST
172. SUSTAINABLE URBAN FORESTS COALITION
173. SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS
174. TEXAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
175. THE CONSERVATION FUND
176. THE CORPS NETWORK
177. THE MOUNTAIN PACT
178. THE MOUNTAINEERS
179. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
180. THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND
181. THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY
182. THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
183. THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP
184. TROUT UNLIMITED
185. TULEYOME
186. TUOLUMNE RIVER TRUST
187. UNCOMPAHGRE PARTNERSHIP
188. VAIL RESORTS
189. VERMONT WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION
190. VIRGINIA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
191. WALLOWA RESOURCES
192. WASHINGTON RESOURCE CONSERVATION & DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
193. WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION
194. WATERSHED RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER
195. WEST VIRGINIA RIVERS COALITION
196. WESTERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER
197. WESTERN LANDOWNERS ALLIANCE
198. WILD SALMON CENTER
199. WILDERNESS WORKSHOP
200. WILDLIFE FOREVER
201. WILDLIFE MISSISSIPPI
202. WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE
203. WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION INC.
204. WYOMING STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION