

TO: Interior, Environment and Related Agencies (Interior) Appropriations Subcommittee Members

RE: FLAME Act Funding Support

DATE: July 21, 2010

Dear Appropriators,

As the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee considers the FY2011 budget for the USDA Forest Service (USFS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI), we the undersigned request your support to:

- Fully fund the FLAME Funds created for the USFS and DOI in the *Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act* (FLAME Act);
- Restore other agency budgets that have been negatively impacted by rising suppression costs;
- Enforce the quarterly reporting requirements to appropriators on the status of the FLAME Funds; and
- Fully fund annual suppression; requiring the use of more predictive modeling based on current weather conditions, fuel loads and other data that contribute to wildland fire risk.

In October of 2009, President Obama signed into law the FLAME Act with overwhelming support from the House and Senate. The FLAME Act represents an important change in the funding mechanism for wildland fire suppression. One of the cornerstones of the FLAME Act was the establishment of two FLAME Funds, one each for USFS and DOI, to be used for emergency wildland fire suppression costs.

In passing the FLAME Act, Congress intended to fully fund the USFS and DOI's suppression needs while eliminating the need to transfer monies from other agency programs to fund emergency wildland fire suppression expenses. The practice of transferring funds from non-fire programs for suppression has undermined the ability of the agencies to implement other important programs. Congress also committed that funding the FLAME Funds would not come at the expense of other agency programs. Furthermore, the Act requires the agencies to report quarterly to the House and Senate on the status of the FLAME Funds and encourages replacing the 10-year rolling average with an improved predictive model to estimate annual suppression costs.

The attention given to wildland fire suppression costs in the President's FY2011 budget proposal highlights the importance of the critical examination of wildland fire suppression funding that Congress undertook in crafting the FLAME Act. We request that you reaffirm the commitment to address this important problem.

Sincerely,

Access Fund, Jason Keith, Policy Director
Alliance for Community Trees, Alice C. Ewen, Executive Director
American Canoe Association, Wade Blackwood, Executive Director
American Rivers, Jim Bradley, Senior Director of Government Relations
American Forests, Gerald J. Gray, Acting Executive Director
American Hiking Society, Dr. Gregory Miller, President
American Whitewater, Mark Singleton, Executive Director
Appalachian Mountain Club, Susan Arnold, Director of Conservation

Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies, Gary J. Taylor, Legislative Director
Black Hills Forest Resource Association, Jeff Parrett, President
Black Hills Regional Multiple Use Coalition, Chance Davis, President
Center for Biological Diversity, Todd Schulke, Forest Policy Director
Choose Outdoors, Bruce Ward, President
Colorado Mountain Club, Bryan Martin, Director of Conservation
Colorado Timber Industry Association, Carl Spaulding, President
Colorado Wild, Ryan Demmy Bidwell, Executive Director
Conservation Northwest, Dave Wentz, Science and Conservation Director
EPIC-Environmental Protection Information Center, Scott Greacen, Executive Director
Flathead Economic Policy Center, Carol Daly, President
Forest Energy Corporation, Rob Davis, President
Framing Our Community, Joyce Dearstyne, Executive Director
Idaho Conservation League, Rick Johnston, Executive Director
Institute for Business & Home Safety, Debra Ballen, General Counsel and Senior VP of Public Policy
International Association of Fire Chiefs, Chief Jeffrey D. Johnson, EFO, CFO, MIFireE President and Chairman of the Board
Kentucky Woodland Owners Association, Betty Williamson, President
Klamath Forest Alliance, Kimberly Baker, Forest and Wildlife Advocate
Lake County Resources Initiative, James K. Walls, Executive Director
Mountaineers, Martinique Grigg, Executive Director
National Association of Counties, Ryan Yates, Associate Legislative Director
National Association of Forest Service Retirees, George Leonard, Board of Directors
National Association of State Foresters, Jay Farrell, Executive Director
National Cattlemen's Beef Association, Council Dustin Van Liew, Executive Director
National Fire Protection Association, Nancy McNabb, Government Affairs Director
National Forest Counties & Schools Coalition, Bob Douglas, Executive Director
National Ski Areas Association, Geraldine Link, Director of Public Policy
National Tribal Environmental Council, Bob Gruenig, Senior Policy Analyst
National Woodland Owners Association, Darrel Pendris, President
Northern Forest Alliance, Bruce Clendenning, Policy Director
Outdoor Alliance, Adam Cramer, Policy Architect
Outdoor Industry Association, Craig Mackey, Government Affairs Director
Public Lands, Council Dustin Van Liew, Executive Director
Regional Council of Rural Counties, Melissa M. White, Federal Affairs Coordinator
Ruffed Grouse Society, Dan Dessecker, Director of Conservation Policy
Sierra Club, Athan Manuel, Director of Lands Protection
Sierra Forest Legacy, Craig Thomas, Executive Director
Siskiyou Project, Shane Jimerfield, Executive Director
Society of American Foresters, Michael Goergen
Sustainable Northwest, Maia J. Enzer, Policy Program Director
Swan Ecosystem Center, Ann Dahl, President
Southern Appalachian Forest Coalition, Mark Shelley, Executive Director
Southwest Society of American Forest, Marlin Johnson, Policy Chair
The Lands Council, Mike Petersen, Executive Director
The Nature Conservancy, Robert L. Bendick, Jr., Director of U.S. Government Relations
The Wilderness Society, Michael Francis, Forest Program Director and Acting VP of Public Policy
The Wildlife Society, Bruce Leopold, PhD, President
Trout Unlimited, Chris Wood, President

Watershed Research & Training Center, E. Lynn Jungwirth, Senior Fellow Policy and Development

Wilderness Workshop, Sloan Shoemaker, Executive Director

WildlandsCPR, Bethanie Walder

Winter Wildlands Alliance, Forrest McCarthy, Public Lands Director