

WILDFIRE DISASTER FUNDING ACT (W DFA, H.R. 167) FACT SHEET

WHAT IS THE W DFA AND ITS PURPOSE?

- The W DFA was introduced by Representative Simpson to provide emergency relief to catastrophic wildfires and restore budgetary stability to the U.S Forest Service without increasing federal spending.
- This legislation would treat wildfire disasters like other natural disasters under the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, which allows disasters like hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and tornadoes to access emergency funds.
- The bill would continue to fund 70 percent of the routine forest firefighting costs that is funded at the 10-year average costs of wildfires. Over the past 10 years, an estimated 6.6 million acres annually have been burned, and one million acres have burned this year.

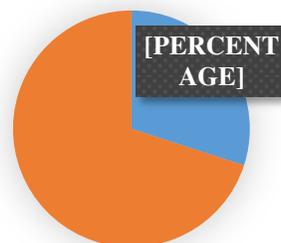
IMPACT OF WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION AND HOW IT'S FUNDED TODAY:

- When wildfire suppression costs exceed congressional appropriated funds, fighting fire agencies are forced to borrow from non-fire programs.

American Wildfires



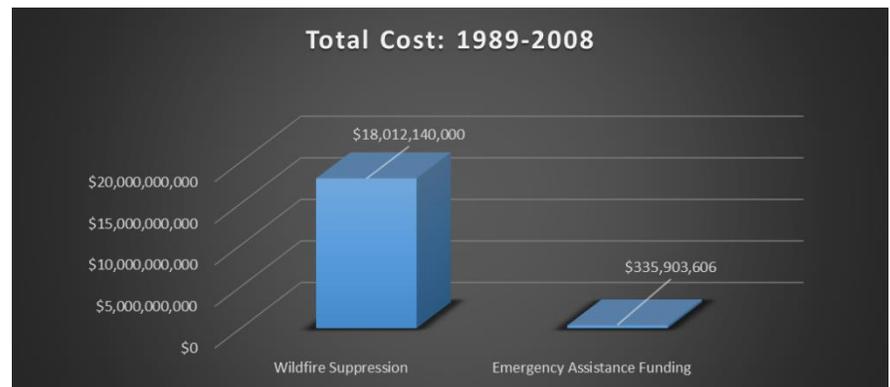
Wildland Fire Management Budget



- Nearly 98 percent of fires are suppressed or managed, but the one percent of catastrophic fires rob 30 percent of the annual budget.
- Restoration and conservation projects (non-fire programs) that help prevent and maintain forest fires would be reduced by nearly \$700 million. **This means that two out of every three dollars would be spent on fire suppression.**
- Thousands of jobs would be at risk from these programs. In 1998, the number of employees who managed National Forest Service lands was 18,000, and now fewer than 11,000 are employed today.

WHY SHOULD FOREST FIRES BE TREATED AS OTHER NATURAL DISASTERS?

- Treating wildfires as other natural disasters would end the practice of fire borrowing from non-fire programs.
- The cost effectiveness is undeniable and would reduce the risk of fire disasters and help maintain healthy forests.



FUNDING:

- The W DFA does not increase spending because it's a budget process bill, not a spending bill.
- Congress will always need to appropriate funds to wildfire suppression, but the W DFA would align it with other emergency natural disasters and end fire borrowing.

TRCP fully supports the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act

For more information on wildfire disasters, please visit www.trcp.org

SOURCES

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- Congressional Research Service, "Wildfire Statistics," Katie Hoover, August 3, 2015
- http://simpson.house.gov/uploadedfiles/wdfa_faqs_114th_congress.pdf
- http://www.nifc.gov/fireInfo/fireInfo_documents/SuppCosts.pdf