

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

RE: FLAME Act Funding Support

DATE: July 21, 2010

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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 Conservation Districts, 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