

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 30, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth HOB
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

As you begin crafting the fiscal year (FY) 2020 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we request that you prioritize funding for forward-thinking, active management strategies that combat catastrophic wildfires before they get started and improve overall forest and watershed health.

While the fiscal year 2018 bill took steps in the right direction, much work remains if we want to address the challenges facing our nation's forests. 2017 was one of the worst wildfire seasons in history with 71,499 fires burning approximately 10 million acres. The Forest Service spent more than \$2.5 billion on suppression costs last fiscal year alone - a new record. 2018 was another terrible season, with 58,083 wildfires burning approximately 8.8 million acres. The Mendocino Complex Fire in Northern California was the largest fire in state history with 459,123 acres burned. The Carr Fire in Northern California claimed eight lives and destroyed more than 1,600 structures. These two fires destroyed 8,900 homes and 329 businesses costing more than \$840 million in insured losses. The Camp Fire was the costliest disaster in the world last year, costing more than \$12.5 billion in insured losses, claiming 88 lives and destroying nearly 19,000 structures, roughly 14,000 of which were homes.

Catastrophic fires also cause significant damage to the environment. Robust data from NASA shows that one catastrophic wildfire can emit more carbon emissions in a few days than total vehicle emissions in an entire state over the course of a year. As a result of wildfires in 2017, Seeley Lake, Montana set a record for the worst air quality ever recorded there - 18 times greater than EPA's safe particle limit. This is a treatable problem, and one which we understand the causes of very well.

Accordingly, we ask that the FY 2020 base bill include the following active management funding priorities found in the President's budget:

- \$107.2 million for timber management programs in the BLM that prioritize planning and preparation activities affecting timber sales volumes and forest health.
- \$54.8 million for BIA Tribal forestry programs.

- \$92.0 million to support healthy rangelands through weed reduction, vegetation treatments and permitted grazing operations.
- \$4.0 million for the National Park Service to improve active forest and vegetation management in the national parks.
- \$450 million for hazardous fuels reduction.
- Funding for Forest Service Forest and Rangeland Research (Forest Service R&D)
- Funding for the Forest Health Management on Federal Lands program (FHM-Federal Lands), a critical program that utilizes active management to suppress forest insects and diseases.
- Funding for the Working Forest Lands program, a program that “focuses on active management and conservation, providing non-industrial private forest landowners with technical assistance and tools.”

We thank you for your consideration of this request, and for your leadership on the committee.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn
Member of Congress



Jody Hice
Member of Congress



Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress



Doug LaMalfa
Member of Congress



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Tom McClintock
Member of Congress



Mark Meadows
Member of Congress



Jason Smith
Member of Congress



Scott R. Tipton
Member of Congress



Glenn "GT" Thompson
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress