

PARTNER CAUCUS on FIRE SUPPRESSION FUNDING SOLUTIONS

NOVEMBER 21, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate
Senate Office Building Russell 317
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
U.S. House of Representatives
House Office Building Longworth 1233
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
U.S. Senate
Senate Office Building Hart 522
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
U.S. House of Representatives
House Office Building Cannon 233
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Democratic Leader Pelosi,

The undersigned organizations represent the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, comprised of a diverse group of international, national, and local organizations. The caucus seeks a comprehensive solution to the wildfire suppression funding issue. As Congress considers solving the fire funding challenge during the lame-duck session, we urge Congress to ensure that the solution is comprehensive in solving the borrowing issue *and* the erosion of budgets due to increasing wildfire suppression costs.

Many proposals under consideration would ban the practice of transferring additional funds when appropriated funding is spent, but that's only a partial fix in addressing the impacts from rising wildland firefighting costs. These proposals do not address the larger problem of shifting funding from non-fire programs to fire programs, which results from the way firefighting funds are calculated, budgeted, and allocated. As that ten-year average is used to calculate suppression increases, and as budgets remain relatively flat, less is available 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 ten-year average, and stabilize the level of funding for suppression within the agencies; 2) access disaster funding for extraordinarily costly fires, including those that may be calculated as part of the ten-year average; and 3) significantly reduce the need to transfer from non-suppression accounts and programs. To meet all these criteria, we recommend any fire funding proposal be amended to fund suppression at 70 percent of the ten-year average, similar to the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, or alternatively, to freeze the ten-year average and access disaster funding for levels beyond that amount. We additionally support accountability measures to ensure cost containment.

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Thank you for your consideration and for addressing this important discussion of wildfire suppression funding challenges. It is critical that Congress take action this year to solve this critical issue. We look forward to continuing to work together to come to a comprehensive solution.

Sincerely,

Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solution

List of 129 Partner Caucus Signers:

For information regarding this letter or members of the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, please contact Cecilia Clavet, cclavet@tnc.org, 703-841-7425.

1. ACCESS FUND
2. AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB
3. AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION
4. AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION
5. AMERICAN FORESTS
6. AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY
7. AMERICAN YOUTHWORKS
8. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
9. ARID LAND INNOVATION
10. ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS
11. ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES
12. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NORTH CAROLINA
13. BLUE GOOSE ALLIANCE
14. BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PARTNERS
15. BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB
16. BOULDER COUNTY
17. BURNEY-HAT CREEK COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND WATERSHED GROUP CFLR
18. BRL LOGGING
19. CALIFORNIA SKI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
20. CHOOSE OUTDOORS
21. CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL
22. COLORADO YOUTH CORPS ASSOCIATION
23. COLUMBIA LAND TRUST
24. COMMUNITY TRAINING WORKS, INC. AKA YOUNG AMERICAN CONSERVATION CORPS
25. CONSERVATION LEGACY
26. CONSERVATION NORTHWEST
27. DEFENDERS OR WILDLIFE
28. EAST JEFFERSON FIRE AND RESCUE, WA
29. ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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30. ECOSYSTEM WORKFORCE PROGRAM
31. ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY STUDY INSTITUTE
32. FLATHEAD ECONOMIC POLICY CENTER
33. FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY
34. FOREST BUSINESS NETWORK
35. FOREST ENERGY CORPORATION
36. FOREST STEWARDS GUILD
37. FOUR FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVE (4FRI) STAKE HOLDER GROUP
38. FRAMING OUR COMMUNITY
39. FRIENDS OF THE URBAN FOREST
40. GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
41. GILA WOODNET
42. GREAT APPALACHIAN VALLEY CONSERVATION CORPS
43. GREATER FLAGSTAFF FORESTS PARTNERSHIP
44. HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
45. IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
46. IDAHO FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
47. IDAHO FOREST RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP
48. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR
49. INDIANA FORESTRY & WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
50. LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES INITIATIVE
51. LASSEN FOREST PRESERVATION
52. LITTLE COLORADO RIVER PLATEAU RC&D AREA, INC.
53. LOUISIANA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
54. MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS
55. MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
56. MOTTEK CONSULTING
57. MT. TAYLOR MANUFACTURING
58. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
59. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES
60. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RV PARKS & CAMPGROUNDS
61. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
62. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY FOREST RESOURCES PROGRAMS
63. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
64. NATIONAL FOREST HOMEOWNERS
65. NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
66. NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION
67. NATIONAL WILDFIRE INSTITUTE
68. NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
69. NEW MEXICO FOREST INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
70. NORTH CAROLINA HORSE COUNCIL
71. NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON FOREST HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

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72. NORTHERN FOREST CENTER
73. NORTHWEST YOUTH CORPS
74. OUTDOOR ALLIANCE
75. OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
76. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
77. PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION
78. PROJECT WILDFIRE
79. PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE
80. PUBLIC LANDS FOUNDATION
81. PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIP
82. QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION
83. QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
84. RESTORATION TECHNOLOGIES
85. ROCKY MOUNTAIN YOUTH CORPS
86. ROOT CAUSE
87. RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY
88. SALMON VALLEY STEWARDSHIP
89. SIERRA BUSINESSMAN COUNCIL
90. SIERRA CLUB
91. SIERRA FOREST LEGACY
92. SIERRA INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
93. SIUSLAW INSTITUTE
94. SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS
95. SOUTH DAKOTA ATV/UTV ASSOCIATION
96. SOUTH FOREST SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP
97. SOUTHEAST CONSERVATION CORPS
98. SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER
99. SOUTHERN OREGON CLIMATE ACTION NOW
100. SOUTHERN OREGON FOREST RESTORATION COLLABORATIVE
101. SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS
102. STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
103. SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST
104. SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS
105. SYCAMORE LAND TRUST, INC.
106. TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS
107. TEXAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
108. THE CORPS NETWORK
109. THE LANDS COUNCIL
110. THE MOUNTAIN PACT
111. THE MOUNTAINEERS
112. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
113. THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

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114. THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
115. THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP
116. TRIPLE R RANCH, SD
117. TROUT UNLIMITED
118. TULEYOME
119. VAIL RESORTS
120. VERMONT WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION
121. WALLOWA RESOURCES
122. WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE
123. WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION
124. WATERSHED RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER
125. WILDLIFE FOREVER
126. WILDLIFE MISSISSIPPI
127. WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE
128. WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
129. WYOMING STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION