



BRUMIDI GROUP INSIGHTS

WILDFIRE POLICY



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INTRODUCTION

The Brumidi Group is a leading advocacy firm based in DC with a growing client base focused on wildfire policy. We have seen firsthand the growing movement to address the wildfire crisis - both with policymakers and external stakeholders. Our team is working on issues across the wildfire ecosystem and are in constant communication with key decisionmakers to push for action on issues most impactful to mitigating extreme wildfire and maintaining safe and sustainable habitats and communities. We are encouraged by the bipartisan nature of the issue, new players entering the space, and growing interest in real, impactful change.

This report focuses on the trends we are seeing in this space and provides updates from experts on the issues they see as most important to moving the needle. Given the onset of the 119th Congress and Trump administration, we focus on what is possible in the near future and look back at the accomplishments of the last Congress and administration.

The Brumidi Group has worked extensively on fire policy with federal, state, and local agencies, Congress, Tribes, NGOs, and industry stakeholders. Some of these voices are included as expert opinions within the report. This work provides our firm with a unique perspective into where issues are moving and who the key players are in this space. Our report aims to share perspective on the broad and growing coalition of voices advocating for sustainable and effective wildfire solutions and where there is the greatest opportunity for impact.

POLICY OVERVIEW

Federal policy related to wildfire has experienced a sharp uptick in recent years. Members of Congress, particularly those that represent the west, are eager to introduce legislation that provides resources to mitigate against and recover from catastrophic wildfires, especially given the devastation in Los Angeles earlier this year.

Wildfire policy is complex and cross-jurisdictional. The range of issues involved in developing comprehensive policy includes forest management, beneficial fire, smoke impacts and public health, workforce training and resources, cross-boundary coordination, data collection and analysis, technology deployment, tribal sovereignty and stewardship, community planning and risk reduction, liability and insurance, post-fire recovery, and more. With such a sprawling ecosystem, every organization, committee, and agency interested in addressing the wildfire crisis can play an important role in finding solutions.

In addition to the increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, much of this regulatory and legislative output has been in response to the federal Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. In 2021, the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* established the Commission and directed its members to make recommendations on how federal agencies should better manage wildfire. 50 federal, state, local, tribal, and private sector representatives were selected as commissioners and developed a [final report](#) composed of 148 recommendations, which was submitted to Congress in September 2023. We were pleased to have clients who served on the commission as commissioners and subject matter experts and are working with many organizations to implement these recommendations.



The Commission's final report spans seven overarching themes:

- 01** Urgent new approaches to address the wildfire crisis
- 02** Supporting collaboration to improve partner involvement at every scale
- 03** Shifting from reactive to proactive in planning for, mitigating and recovering from fire
- 04** Enabling beneficial fire to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfire
- 05** Supporting and expanding the workforce to hire and retain the wildland firefighting staff needed to address the crisis
- 06** Modernizing tools for informed decision-making to better leverage available technology and information
- 07** Investing in resilience through increased spending now to reduce costs in the long run

The Commission stresses that while its recommendations are wide-ranging, they are also complementary and interrelated, and should be implemented through an “all of the above” approach. Comprehensive legislation and agency coordination will be necessary to authorize, fund, and implement the Commission’s recommendations as outlined in the final report.

The final report created a roadmap for agencies and Congress to advance this vision. However, given the broad jurisdictional issues and varying levels of difficulty achieving the recommendations, not all wildfire bills are perfectly aligned with the Commission’s report. We expect the 119th Congress to build on legislation, much of which was bipartisan, from the 118th Congress and continue to work through the Commission’s report as a source of consensus-driven recommendations.

FIRE POLICY IN THE 119TH CONGRESS

Looking toward the 119th Congress & Trump Administration

We expect the following themes to emerge in the coming years on fire policy:



Many of the ideas from the 118th Congress will be carried over in a bipartisan manner.



There will continue to be bipartisan action on these issues and growing interest from nontraditional players who see the impacts of fire affecting their states/districts.



A now year-long fire season means that agencies and elected officials will be looking for out-of-the-box solutions and open to radical change in order to prevent future crises, offering an opportunity for external organizations to provide ideas.

Committees of Jurisdiction

Fire policy becomes complicated quickly given the jurisdictional issues it faces across committees and agencies. On top of that, many of the committee leadership are new, meaning that they will bring fresh ideas and perspectives to wildfire policy.

* New to leadership role

● New to the committee

SENATE



Senate Appropriations Interior Subcommittee

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Chair
Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND)
Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE)

Sen. Markwayne Mullin (R-OK)
Sen. Mike Rounds (R-SD)
Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)*
Sen. Chris Van Hollen (D-MD)
Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
Sen. Kirstin Gillibrand (D-NY)
Sen. Jon Ossoff (D-GA)



Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee

Sen. John Boozman (R-AR), Chair*
Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY)
Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND)
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)
Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS)
Sen. Roger Marshall (R-KS)
Sen. Tommy Tuberville (R-AL)
Sen. Jim Justice (R-WV)

Sen. Chuck Grassley (R-IA)
Sen. John Thune (R-SD)
Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE)
Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS)
Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)*
Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO)
Sen. Tina Smith (D-MN)
Sen. Dick Durbin (D-IL)

Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ)
Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM)
Sen. Raphael Warnock (D-GA)
Sen. Peter Welch (D-VT)
Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA)
Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA)
Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI)



Senate Commerce, Science, & Transportation Committee

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX), Chair
Sen. John Thune (R-SD)
Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)
Sen. Deb Fischer (R-NE)
Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS)
Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)
Sen. Marsha Blackburn (R-TN)
Sen. Todd Young (R-IN)
Sen. Ted Budd (R-NC)
Sen. Eric Schmitt (R-MO)

Sen. John Curtis (R-UT)
Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH)
Sen. Tim Sheehy (R-MT)
Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV)
Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY)
Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA)*
Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)
Sen. Brian Schatz (D-HI)
Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA)
Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI)

Sen. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI)
Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL)
Sen. Jacky Rosen (D-NV)
Sen. Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM)
Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO)
Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA)
Sen. Andy Kim (D-NJ)
Sen. Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE)

SENATE



Senate Energy & Natural Resources Committee

Sen. Mike Lee (R-UT), Chair*
 Sen. John Barrasso (R-WY)
 Sen. Jim Risch (R-ID)
 Sen. Steve Daines (R-MT)
Sen. Tom Cotton (R-AR)
Sen. Jim Justice (R-WV)
Sen. Dave McCormick (R-PA)

Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-LA)
 Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS)
 Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK)
 Sen. John Hoeven (R-ND)
 Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)*
 Sen. Ron Wyden (R-OR)
 Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-WA)

Sen. Masie Hirono (D-HI)
 Sen. Angus King (I-ME)
 Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV)
 Sen. John Hickenlooper (D-CO)
 Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)
Sen. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)



Senate Environment & Public Works Committee

Sen. Shelley Moore Capito (R-WV), Chair*
 Sen. Kevin Cramer (R-ND)
 Sen. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY)
Sen. John Curtis (R-UT)
 Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-SC)
 Sen. Dan Sullivan (R-AK)

Sen. Pete Ricketts (R-NE)
 Sen. Roger Wicker (R-MS)
 Sen. John Boozman (R-AR)
Sen. Jerry Moran (R-KS)
 Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI)*
 Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT)

Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)
 Sen. Ed Markey (D-MA)
 Sen. Mark Kelly (D-AZ)
 Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)
Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA)



Senate Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs Committee

Sen. Rand Paul (R-KY), Chair*
 Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI)
 Sen. James Lankford (R-OK)
 Sen. Rick Scott (R-FL)
 Sen. Josh Hawley (R-MO)

Sen. Bernie Moreno (R-OH)
Sen. Joni Ernst (R-IA)
Sen. Tim Scott (R-SC)
 Sen. Gary Peters (D-MI)*
Sen. Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH)

Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT)
Sen. John Fetterman (D-PA)
Sen. Andy Kim (D-NJ)
Sen. Ruben Gallego (D-AZ)
Sen. Elissa Slotkin (D-MI)

HOUSE



House Appropriations Interior Subcommittee

Rep. Mike Simpson (R-ID), Chair
 Rep. Chellie Pingree (D-ME)*
 Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV)
 Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN)

Rep. Guy Reschenthaler (R-PA)
 Rep. Josh Harder (D-CA)
 Rep. Michael Cloud (R-TX)
Rep. Jim Clyburn (D-SC)

Rep. Ryan Zinke (R-MT)
 Rep. Jake Ellzey (R-TX)
Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-UT)

HOUSE



House Agriculture Committee

Rep. GT Thompson (R-PA), Chair
 Rep. Frank Lucas (R-OK)
 Rep. Austin Scott (R-GA)
 Rep. Rick Crawford (R-AR)
 Rep. Scott DesJarlais (R-TN)
 Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA)
 Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC)
 Rep. Trent Kelly (R-MS)
 Rep. Don Bacon (R-NE)
 Rep. Mike Bost (R-IL)
 Rep. Dusty Johnson (R-SD)
 Rep. Jim Baird (R-IN)
 Rep. Tracey Mann (R-KS)
 Rep. Randy Feenstra (R-IA)
 Rep. Mary Miller (R-IL)
 Rep. Barry Moore (R-AL)
 Rep. Kat Cammack (R-FL)
 Rep. Brad Finstad (R-MN)

Rep. John Rose (R-TN)
 Rep. Ronny Jackson (R-TX)
 Rep. Monica De La Cruz (R-TX)
 Rep. Zach Nunn (R-IA)
 Rep. Mark Alford (R-MO)
 Rep. Derrick Van Orden (R-WI)
 Rep. Dan Newhouse (R-WA)
 Rep. Tony Wied (R-WI)
 Rep. Rob Bresnahan (R-PA)
 Rep. Mark Messmer (R-IN)
 Rep. Mark Harris (R-NC)
 Rep. Dave Taylor (R-OH)
 Rep. Angie Craig (D-MN)*
 Rep. David Scott (D-GA)
 Rep. Jim Costa (D-CA)
 Rep. Jim McGovern (D-MA)
 Rep. Alma Adams (D-NC)
 Rep. Jahana Hayes (D-CT)

Rep. Shontel Brown (D-OH)
 Rep. Sharice Davids (D-KS)
 Rep. Andrea Salinas (D-OR)
 Rep. Don Davis (D-NC)
 Rep. Jill Tokuda (D-HI)
 Rep. Nikki Budzinski (D-IL)
 Rep. Eric Sorensen (D-IL)
 Rep. Gabe Vasquez (D-NM)
 Rep. Jonathan Jackson (D-IL)
 Rep. Shri Thaenedar (D-MI)
 Rep. Adam Gray (D-CA)
 Rep. Kristen McDonald Rivet (D-MI)
 Rep. Shomari Figures (D-AL)
 Rep. Eugene Vindman (D-VA)
 Rep. Josh Riley (D-NY)
 Rep. John Mannion (D-NY)
 Rep. April McClain Delaney (D-MD)



House Natural Resource Committee

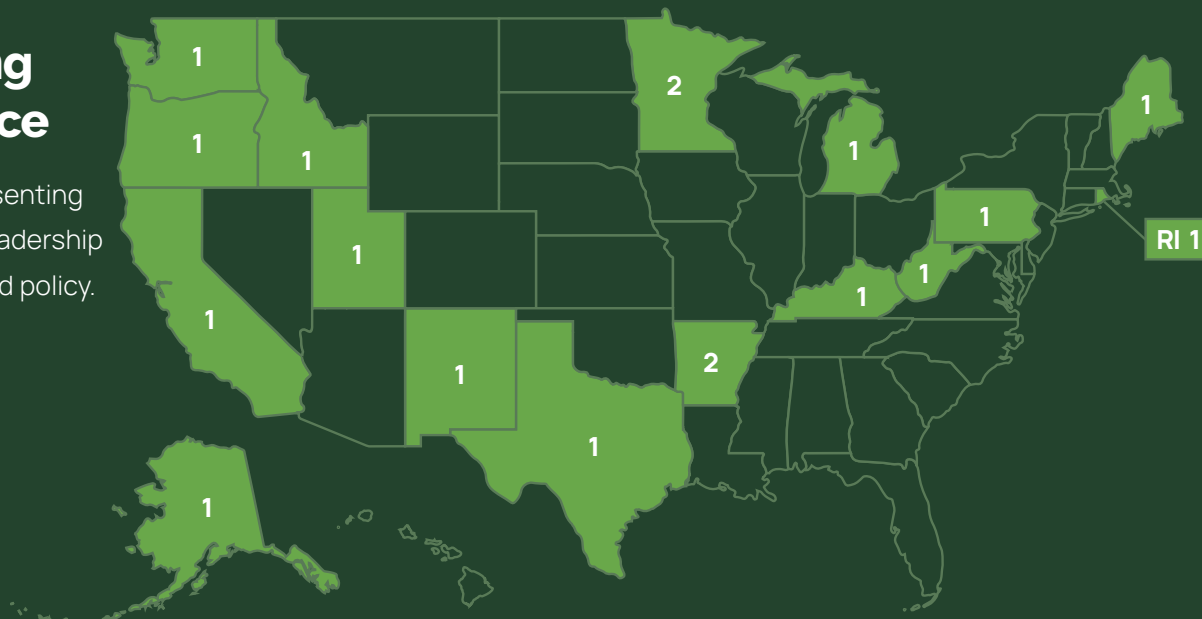
Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AR), Chair
 Rep. Rob Wittman (R-VA)
 Rep. Tom McClintock (R-CA)
 Rep. Paul Gosar (R-AZ)
 Rep. Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS)
 Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA)
 Rep. Daniel Webster (R-FL)
 Rep. Russ Fulcher (R-ID)
 Rep. Pete Stauber (R-MN)
 Rep. Tom Tiffany (R-WI)
 Rep. Lauren Boebert (R-CO)
 Rep. Cliff Bentz (R-OR)
 Rep. Jen Kiggans (R-VA)
 Rep. Wesley Hunt (R-TX)
 Rep. Mike Collins (R-GA)

Rep. Harriet Hageman (R-WY)
 Rep. Mark Amodei (R-NV)
 Rep. Tim Walberg (R-MI)
 Rep. Mike Ezell (R-MS)
 Rep. Celeste Maloy (R-UT)
 Rep. Addison McDowell (R-N.C.)
 Rep. Jeff Crank (R-CO)
 Rep. Nick Begich (R-AK)
 Rep. Jeff Hurd (R-CO)
 Rep. Mike Kennedy (R-UT)
 Rep. Jared Huffman (D-CA)*
 Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ)
 Rep. Sarah Elfreth (D-MD)
 Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO)
 Rep. Teresa Leger Fernández (D-N.M.)

Rep. Maxine Dexter (D-OR)
 Rep. Val Hoyle (D-OR)
 Rep. Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ)
 Rep. Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.)
 Rep. Seth Magaziner (D-R.I.)
 Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI)
 Rep. Nydia Velazquez (D-N.Y.)
 Rep. Julia Brownley (D-CA)
 Rep. Darren Soto (D-FL)
 Rep. Jared Golden (D-ME)
 Rep. Dave Min (D-CA)
 Rep. Pablo José Hernández Rivera (D-P.R.)
 Rep. Emily Randall (D-WA)
 Rep. Adam Gray (D-CA)
 Rep. Luz Rivas (D-CA)

Mapping Influence

States representing committee leadership on fire-related policy.



Power Players

Known for their interest in fire policy, here are the elected officials we believe will prioritize wildfire policy early in the new Congress.



Sen. John Boozman (R-AK)

As Chair of the Agriculture Committee charged with rewriting the Farm Bill, Sen. Boozman has expressed interest in prioritizing fire policy. He also sits on the Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus.



Rep. Bruce Westerman (R-AK)

Rep. Westerman will continue to prioritize his Fix Our Forests Act, which has moved through the House. As Chair of the House Natural Resources Committee, he will likely focus committee work on forest health, specifically as it relates to preventing extreme fire.



Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-NM)

With his role as incoming Ranking Member of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, Sen. Heinrich and team will play a large role in any fire policy moving through committee.

Fresh Faces to Watch

Incoming freshmen will play a role in shaping fire policy.
Here's who we suspect could have an outsized influence:



Sen. Tim Sheehy (R-MT)

Sheehy is the founder of Bridger Aerospace, an aerial firefighting and surveillance company. He has been a leader introducing bipartisan wildfire-related legislation so far this Congress.



Sen. Adam Schiff (D-CA)

Transitioning from the House to the Senate, Schiff has called for an independent commission to review responses to the Los Angeles wildfires, emphasizing the need for comprehensive analysis to improve future preparedness and response strategies.



Representative Yassamin Ansari (D-AZ)

Serving Arizona's 3rd district, Ansari has a background in climate policy and has expressed a strong commitment to addressing environmental challenges, including wildfire mitigation, in her district.



Representative Gabe Evans (R-CO)

Representing Colorado's 8th district, Evans has a background in law enforcement and military service, including as a Colorado National Guardsman fighting wildfires. During his campaign he pointed to wildfire as the most pressing environmental issue facing Colorado.

AGENCY JURISDICTION

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)



U.S. Forest Service (USFS)

- [Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program](#): Focuses on thinning forests and conducting prescribed burns to reduce fire risk.
- [Community Wildfire Defense Grants](#): Provides funding to at-risk communities for developing and implementing Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPPs).
- [National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy](#): Promotes resilient landscapes, fire-adapted communities, and safe, effective wildfire response.
- [Forest Health Protection](#): Offers technical assistance for preventing and managing pest and disease outbreaks that contribute to wildfire risk.



National Conservation Resources Service (NRCS)

- [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#): Provides financial and technical assistance to landowners for implementing conservation practices that reduce wildfire risk, such as brush management and forest stand improvement.
- [Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\) Program](#): Helps communities recover from the impacts of wildfires by stabilizing and restoring watersheds.
- [Conservation Stewardship Program \(CSP\)](#): Supports landowners in adopting advanced conservation practices, including those that mitigate wildfire risks and promote forest health.
- [Healthy Forests Reserve Program \(HFRP\)](#): Offers incentives for landowners to restore, enhance, and protect forested ecosystems that can be threatened by wildfire.
- [Regional Conservation Partnership Program \(RCPP\)](#): Collaborates with partners to address wildfire risks and promote landscape resilience through coordinated conservation efforts.



DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR



- **Fuels Management Program**: Focuses on vegetation treatments to reduce fire risks and protect park resources.
- **Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA)**: Collaborative projects between the DOI and tribes to reduce wildfire risks in forested tribal areas.
- **Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR) Program**: Supports the restoration of wildlife habitats and landscapes affected by wildfires.
- **Joint Fire Science Program** (in partnership with other agencies): Conducts research on wildfire behavior, effects, and management techniques.

Bureau of Land Management (BLM)



- **Fuels Management Program**: Implements treatments like thinning and prescribed burns to manage hazardous fuels.
- **Fire Program**: Provides firefighting resources, including crews, aircraft, and engines, for wildfire suppression.
- **Rural Fire Readiness Program**: Trains and deploys BLM personnel for wildfire response during peak fire seasons.
- **Community Wildfire Assistance Program**: Supports local efforts in creating fire-adapted communities and reducing wildfire risk.

National Park Service (NPS)



- **Wildland Fire Program**: Conducts studies on fire behavior, effects, and ecological impacts to inform park management practices.

Bureau of Indian Affairs



- **Fuels Management Program**: Provides resources and funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects on tribal lands.
- **Wildfire Prevention Program**: Focuses on education and prevention strategies to reduce wildfire occurrences on tribal lands.
- **Burned Area Rehabilitation Program**: Assists tribes in post-fire recovery efforts, including soil stabilization and ecosystem restoration.

Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS)



- **Fire Management**: Focuses on fuels management, wildfire management, wildfire prevention, and post-fire emergency stabilization and restoration on FWS lands.

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY



Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- [Fire Management Assistance Grant \(FMAG\)](#): Provides funding to state and local governments during large wildfires to cover firefighting expenses.
- [Hazard Mitigation Grant Program \(HMGP\)](#): Funds projects aimed at reducing wildfire risk and building resilient communities.
- [Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities \(BRIC\)](#): Supports pre-disaster mitigation efforts, including wildfire risk reduction projects.
- [U.S. Fire Administration National Fire Academy](#): Provides free training and educational materials to support local fire departments and emergency service organizations.



FEMA

NATIONAL INTERAGENCY FIRE CENTER

- [National Interagency Fire Center](#): Central support center for fighting wildland fires



118TH CONGRESS RETROSPECTIVE

As we look back on the 118th Congress, we can see which legislative topics gained traction and who will likely carry that momentum into the 119th Congress.

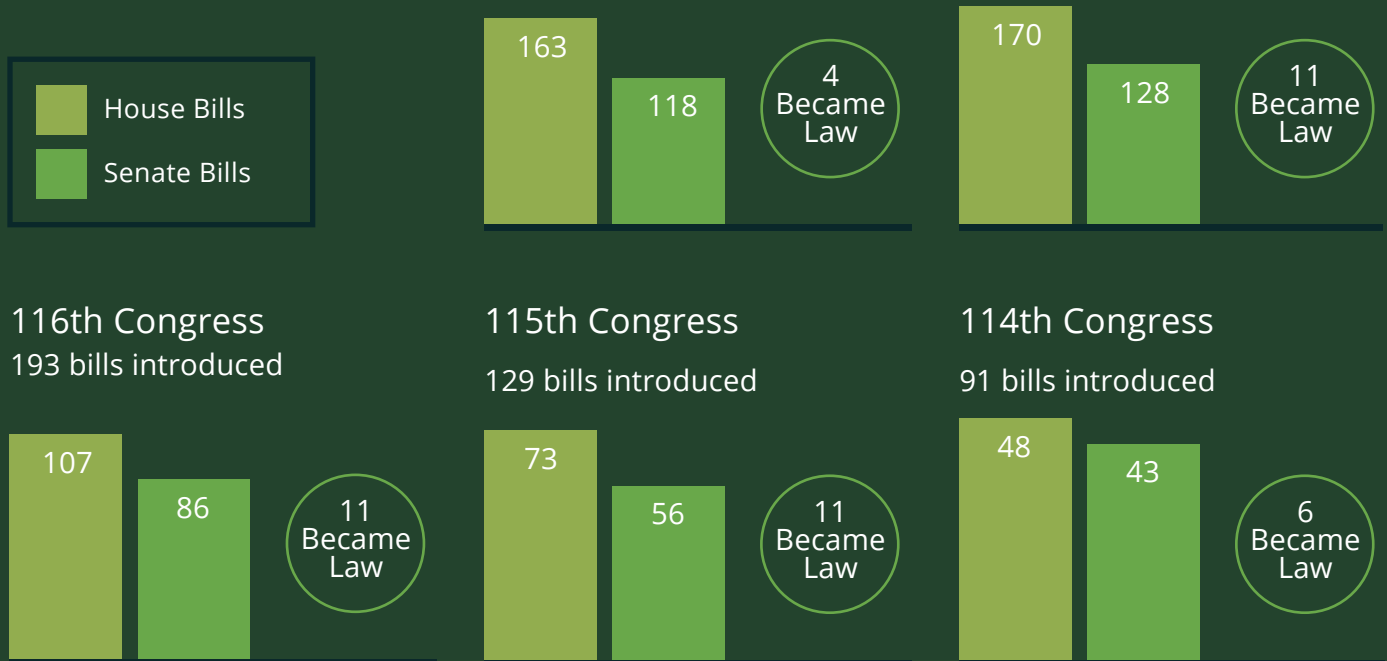
Relevant Legislation

Hundreds of wildfire-related bills were introduced in the 118th Congress; many of which were bipartisan. The issues addressed by these bills ranged from direct appropriations for wildland firefighting and mitigation activities, forest management and stewardship, environmental permitting, firefighter pay and workforce resources, technology deployment, and more. **We've included summaries of some of the more high-profile bills that we expect to see reintroduced below.**

Legislation That Advanced:

	Passed out of Committee (House)	Passed House	Passed out of Committee (Senate)	Passed Senate	Signed by POTUS
Fix Our Forests Act (H.R. 8790)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Farm Food, and National Security Act (H.R. 8467)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Tribal Forest Protection Act Amendments Act (S. 4370)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Weather Development Act (H.R. 4866)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Fire Ready Nation Act (S. 4343)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Disaster Management Costs Modernization Act (S. 3071)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Number of Wildfire Bills



Fire Policy Champions

In the 118 Congress, the following Members introduced the most wildfire legislation:

House



Rep. Joe Neguse (D-CO)

13 bills



Rep. Doug LaMalfa (R-CA)

8 bills



Rep. Josh Harder (D-CA)

5 bills

Senate



Sen. Alex Padilla (D-CA)

13 bills



Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-OR)

12 bills



Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO)

10 bills

What committees held hearings on fire policy?



Science, Space, and Technology



Natural Resources



Agriculture



Homeland Security



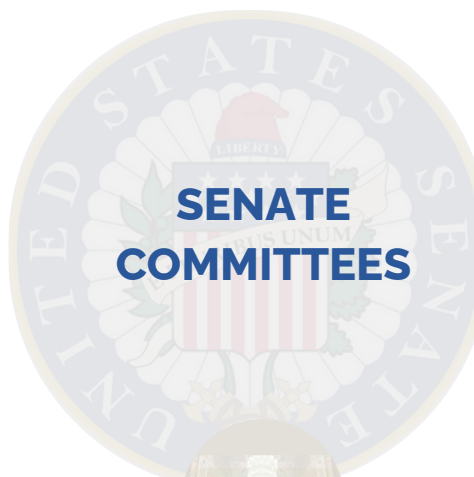
Energy & Commerce



Appropriations



Transportation & Infrastructure



Appropriations



Energy & Natural Resources



Environment & Public Works



Homeland Security & Governmental Affairs



Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry



Budget



Indian Affairs



Commerce, Science, & Transportation

FY25 Appropriations

Over time - regardless of administration - fire spending within the U.S. Forest Service and Department of Interior has largely increased.

Overall funding numbers for fire vs. overall USFS/DOI

	DOI		USFS	
Fiscal Year	Office of Wildland Fire	Overall Budget	Fire*	Overall Budget
FY 2020	\$994 M	\$12.6 B	\$2.8 B	\$7.4 B
FY 2021	\$993 M	\$12.8 B	\$3.1 B	\$8 B
FY 2022	\$1.53 B	\$16.1 B	\$3.3 B	\$8.6 B
FY 2023	\$1.77 B	\$17.6 B	\$3.6 B	\$9.2 B
FY 2024	\$1.73 B	\$18.4 B	\$3.97 B	\$9.7 B

**Covers suppression, preparedness, fuel reduction, and Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund*

EXPERT VIEWS

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BRUMIDI GROUP

Madeline Wade

The Expanding Stakeholder Interest in Federal Wildfire Policy



Wildfire policy is no longer a niche issue confined to federal land agencies and rural communities—it has become a critical issue for a growing number of stakeholders across a wide range of sectors. The increasing frequency and severity of wildfires, coupled with their expanding economic, environmental, and public health impacts, have driven broader engagement from new players in the advocacy space. **The following trends can show why wildfire policy is becoming a national priority across all regions of the country:**

The Cost of Wildfire is Skyrocketing: The financial toll of wildfires has escalated dramatically, drawing attention from the insurance industry, state and local governments, and businesses. The National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC) reports that annual federal wildfire suppression costs have exceeded \$3 billion in recent years, with total economic damage (including property losses and recovery efforts) often surpassing \$100 billion per year. External groups who see the long-tail of recovery are joining advocacy efforts to find proactive solutions.

Public Health Impacts Are Driving Concern:

Wildfire smoke now affects populations far beyond the western United States, leading to heightened concern from public health agencies, medical professionals, and advocacy groups. The American Lung Association and other health organizations are advocating for stronger wildfire mitigation policies to address these growing risks.

Utility and Infrastructure Risks Are Escalating:

Utilities have become major stakeholders in wildfire discussions due to their role in fire prevention and liability concerns. Federal and state policymakers are working with utilities on grid hardening and vegetation management regulations to reduce fire risk.

Bipartisan Policy Interest Is Growing: Unlike many environmental issues, wildfire policy has found bipartisan attention. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act include billions of dollars for forest management, prescribed fire, and community resilience. The Bipartisan Wildfire Caucus in the House and Senate is growing in numbers and has active elected officials and staff eager to find solutions to address extreme fire. Advocacy groups are seeing that real, bipartisan work can be done and are bringing new ideas to the conversation.

BRUMIDI GROUP

Brett Fulcer**The Financial Implications of
Catastrophic Wildfire: A Look at FY25
Federal Appropriations and Broader
Economic Impact**

Catastrophic wildfires have become a more frequent and severe phenomenon in the U.S. Wildfires not only result in loss of life, environmental degradation, and displacement of communities but also pose significant financial burdens on governments, businesses, and individuals. The financial implications of catastrophic wildfires are vast, affecting everything from federal budgets to private sector insurance costs, public health expenses, and broader economic productivity.

In recent years, wildfire suppression and management have increasingly strained federal, state, and local budgets. According to the Forest Service, expenditures on wildfire suppression have grown dramatically, consuming a larger share of the agency's total budget. In the early 1990s, wildfire suppression made up just 15% of the Forest Service's annual budget. Today, that number has risen to nearly 60%, leaving fewer resources for other forest management activities, such as fire prevention, land restoration, and recreation services.

For Fiscal Year 2025, federal appropriations for wildfire management are expected to keep up with the trend of increased spending. The Biden Administration's FY25 budget request included approximately \$6.8 billion for wildfire suppression and mitigation, a significant increase from the \$5.3 billion enacted in FY24. This reflects the growing need for proactive fire prevention measures, such as controlled burns and improved firebreaks. Late

last year, Congress provided over \$100 billion in supplemental funding to address damage from disasters in 2023 and 2024, much of which was caused by wildfire. In addition to the annual appropriations Congress will negotiate in the coming months, another round of supplemental disaster funding is expected to support recovery from the devastating fires in Los Angeles - the damage of which could easily necessitate another \$100 billion in federal support.

The demand for federal aid in the wake of catastrophic wildfire is staggeringly high. Wildfires often cause substantial damage to public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, power lines, and water systems.

After the 2017 Sonoma County wildfires in California, the cost to rebuild roads, bridges, and other public facilities reached nearly \$100 million.

The private sector also bears significant costs associated with wildfire-related disruptions. Wildfires can lead to business closures, supply chain interruptions, and loss of tourism revenue, particularly in states heavily reliant on outdoor recreation and agriculture. The healthcare costs associated with wildfires, particularly from smoke-related illnesses, have also become a growing concern.

One of the major financial implications of catastrophic wildfires is the impact on insurance. With the increase in both the frequency and intensity of wildfires, insurance companies have opted to reassess their risk models and premiums for properties located in fire-prone areas, particularly in states like California, Oregon, and Colorado. The 2018 Camp Fire in California, which resulted in over \$16 billion in losses, was at the time one of the costliest wildfires in U.S.

history, prompting insurance companies to raise premiums, reduce coverage, or, in some cases, pull out of certain markets altogether. With early damage estimates predicting hundreds of billions of dollars and insurance companies dropping thousands of policies and closing their doors, the LA fires could change the insurance industry as we know it.

As wildfires become more frequent and destructive due to climate change, governments at all levels are being forced to allocate more resources to firefighting, prevention, and rebuilding efforts. Federal spending for wildfire management reflects a growing recognition of the need to not only invest in suppression-related training and resources, wildfire resilience planning, and mitigation activities, but to acknowledge the need for comprehensive climate action.



BRUMIDI GROUP

Charles Cooper

Understanding the Bipartisan Nature of Wildfire Policy



In what has long been a crowded policy space in the nation's capital with countless issues competing for attention and support, wildfire policy has quickly become one of the most bipartisan issues in Congress. Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate (and many committees on both sides of the Capitol) are coming together to advance legislative efforts to address wildfire.

While policymakers may be coming to the table for different reasons (some for climate change, some for budget, some for forest management, some for outdoor recreation, and all for the protection of life and property), the legislative interest in wildfire policy clearly growing.

Watching where the growth in this policy movement is coming from may be even more interesting than the growth itself. A movement that has traditionally been driven by the west is increasingly finding allies across the country. Non-profit stakeholders in this space are becoming more influential and are launching sophisticated messaging and policy campaigns. Academia is becoming engaged in the policy space to lend their subject matter expertise. The advocacy community is prioritizing wildfire across a variety of policy areas. The press that covers Congress is elevating these issues within the public discourse. And, policymakers on both sides of the political aisle are responding.

The obvious reason for this bipartisanship and policy growth is the increased frequency and greater impact of wildfires in recent years – 8.9 million acres

burned in 2024 as a result of more than 61,000 wildfires. But it is also more nuanced than that.

Ownership of these issues are no longer just within the four walls of the Forest Service (although they play a major role). Wildfire mitigation, forest management, and wildfire response are covering a much larger footprint across the federal government and congressional committees than ever before. In turn, those entities are providing more leadership, more coordination, more modernized policies, and more funding.

Any DC insider that analyzes the wildfire policy space would clearly highlight that these trends (broader policy community support, bipartisan champions, and a whole of government approach) are not going away any time soon. The question that remains is when will all of this support and momentum convert to comprehensive policy solutions signed into law. Some of that depends on other, unrelated issues that are high on the agenda. But regardless, we are reaching a point where wildfire policy will be at the top of the agenda.

Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC)



What Wildfire Policies are Most Needed to Support Rural Communities?

The Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition (RVCC) is an inclusive coalition of rural community-based organizations, regional and national conservation organizations, academic researchers, industry partners, federal and state land managers, and foundations working together to advance collaborative, place-based conservation solutions that support both land stewardship and rural well-being across the West. Healthy landscapes and vibrant rural communities are interdependent. RVCC supports bipartisan solutions that provide capacity and federal authority to mitigate the impacts of wildfire on human health, the economy, community well-being, and the environment.

A cross-cutting policy priority for RVCC is supporting programs and authorities designed to increase collaborative capacity and community-based resources to effectively confront the wildfire crisis. Necessary solutions include the development of standalone programs that fund place-based groups to increase collaborative capacity; match flexibility and exceptions to enable greater participation by under-resourced partners supporting wildfire management activities; support and funding for partnerships, collaborative planning, administration and implementation of current programs and authorities, such as in the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, Joint Chiefs Landscape Restoration Partnership, Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program, Stewardship Authority, and Good Neighbor Authority.

Meaningful change for the trajectory of wildfire risk will require investment in the most critical enabling conditions needed for long-term success: workforce capacity, wood utilization infrastructure, and attainable housing. To improve forest health and decrease the risk of catastrophic wildfire, proactive forest management is necessary. This requires ramping up fuels and forest health treatments, in particular prescribed and cultural fire treatments. To do this work at scale, a strong and supported local workforce is vital for rural communities in the West. There is an urgent need for more wood utilization capacity and community-scale sawmill facilities in rural communities to support forest fuels reduction work, community wildfire risk reduction, and climate adaptation.

Legislation and policies that support our rural workforce, especially our wildland firefighters and other natural resource professionals are critical. Across the wildfire regions of the West, the lack of attainable housing has become one of the greatest barriers to growing resilient forest workforce capacity in rural communities. Policy solutions to increase the supply of attainable housing are desperately needed, including policies to remove regulatory barriers to housing, and policies that invest in shared equity housing solutions and regional manufacturing capacity of off-site panelized housing.

For more information, visit www.ruralvoicescoalition.org/issue-papers

Climate and Wildfire Institute



Fragmentation between wildfire research, policy, and practice can impede efforts to effectively innovate and implement solutions critical to our shared future with fire.

Innovations in wildland fire management are often developed in isolation, independent of practical input from policymakers and on-the-ground practitioners[1]. Inadequate training of cutting-edge tools and technologies can lead to underutilization or ineffective application of advancements in wildland fire management[2]. Dispersed data collected by different agencies and organizations may not be readily accessible or compatible, resulting in delays of timely information among stakeholders[3].

The wildfire challenges we continue to face do not operate in a silo – and neither should we. The Climate & Wildfire Institute was established as a boundary organization to weave together science, policy, and practice – integrating collective knowledge and resources and implementing more cohesive solutions to climate and wildfire resilience.



Policy Priorities in the 119th Congress

CWI's policy priorities in the 119th Congress are guided largely by the recommendations of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, and emphasize the importance of collaborative, science-based approaches to wildfire resilience and management.

CWI is dedicated to whole systems approaches to federal policy, which includes improving fire-prone ecosystem health and addressing catastrophic wildfire risk to wildlands, the wildland-urban interface, and more densely populated urban areas alike. The 119th Congress will present a range of challenges and opportunities for fire management and resilience. Importantly, we have an obligation as a nation to support communities to recover from recent catastrophic fires. The federal government can also play a part in helping communities prepare and adapt to evolving fire conditions by investing in planning, education, outreach, and infrastructure.

The 119th Congress will also present new opportunities to upscale and streamline proven strategies like prescribed fire and hazardous fuels reduction to improve forest and ecosystem health and reduce catastrophic fire risk in the process. These efforts should be supported and advanced to reach the pace and scale of work needed to lessen critical fire hazards and restore our forests and ecosystems to good health. At the same time, advocates must be careful that proposed changes in policy fix problems in ways that improve ecosystem and fire management conditions without eroding our nation's bedrock environmental laws.

Science- and data-informed decision-making is critical for effective fire management. CWI supports legislation in the 119th Congress to establish the National Wildfire Intelligence Center. The National Wildfire Intelligence Center would centralize wildfire data and science across local, state, tribal, and federal agencies, increasing wildfire monitoring and imaging capabilities, assisting with decision-support during wildfire crises, informing recovery, and streamlining federal wildfire response. With its centralized approach, the National Wildfire Intelligence Center would emphasize the importance of shared data and resources to enhance the effectiveness of fire management strategies across agencies.

To lessen catastrophic fire risks and promote sustainable electrification nationwide, we must also continue to modernize and fire-harden America's electrical grid infrastructure in a permanently effective way, without putting the full onus on brush clearing in utility corridors. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which was signed into law in 2021, allocates funding specifically to improve the resilience of the electrical grid against fires, particularly in wildfire-prone areas. In the new Congress, lawmakers should continue delivering on policy and incentives to modernize the grid and reduce critical fire hazards around major infrastructure.

Professionalizing the Workforce

Transitioning to a Permanent, Professionalized Workforce: CWI supports transitioning the wildland fire workforce to a permanent, professionalized workforce with benefits and good pay. This includes supporting policies that provide stable employment, competitive salaries, and comprehensive benefits for wildland firefighters and forest health professionals. By professionalizing the workforce, CWI aims to enhance the capacity and effectiveness of wildfire response and forest management efforts.

Upscaling and Streamlining Training and Opportunities: CWI encourages federal agencies to upscale and streamline training and opportunities in forest health, fuels mitigation, and prescribed fire application. This includes increasing funding for training programs, creating career development pathways, and promoting workforce diversity. By investing in the professional development of the wildland fire workforce, CWI aims to build a more skilled and resilient team capable of addressing the complex challenges of wildfire management.

Improving Forest Management by Leveraging Local Partnerships and Co-Management Strategies

Scaling Up and Streamlining Forest Health and Fire Management: CWI sees opportunity to scale up and streamline forest health and fire management through targeted permitting reform to expedite wildfire mitigation and adaptation projects. By reducing certain barriers to implementation, the pace of delivering critical forest health and management treatments can be accelerated.

Advancing Tribal Rights and Sovereignty: CWI is committed to advancing Tribal rights and sovereignty in decision-making processes related to wildfire management. This includes supporting co-management agreements and the incorporation of traditional fire practices. By recognizing and supporting Indigenous knowledge and practices, CWI aims to foster more effective and culturally appropriate wildfire management strategies.

Supporting Fire Adapted Communities and Infrastructure

Urban Planning and Community/Residential Home Hardening: CWI supports continued federal investment in planning and residential home hardening initiatives that promote fire-adapted communities. This includes encouraging the adoption of building codes and land-use planning practices that reduce wildfire risks. By integrating fire-resistant materials and designs into new and existing structures, communities can better withstand wildfire events.

Modernizing America's Electrical Grid: To reduce fire hazards, CWI supports efforts to update and modernize the electrical grid. This involves investing in technologies that enhance grid resilience, such as

undergrounding power lines, installing advanced sensors, and implementing smart grid technologies. These measures aim to prevent electrical equipment from igniting wildfires and ensure a more reliable power supply during fire events.

Breakdown Data Silos Through Open Data, Advancing Field-Responsive Research, and Filling in Knowledge Gaps Around Priority Landscape

Promoting Emerging Fire Management and Forest Health Technology, Research, and Outreach: CWI emphasizes the importance of leveraging emerging technologies and research to improve fire management and forest health, providing they are responsive to field needs and incorporate stakeholder input. This includes supporting the development and deployment of advanced fire detection systems, remote sensing technologies, and data analytics tools. CWI also advocates for increased funding for research and outreach programs that educate communities about fire prevention and mitigation strategies.

Identify Knowledge Gaps in Fire Impacts on Public Health, Water Supply and Quality, and Carbon

Storage: CWI emphasizes the importance of protecting carbon-rich landscapes and crucial watersheds for priority funding and conservation. Little is known about the carbon release that happens during a megafire events and how it impacts public health, ecosystem services, and our global weather systems. By focusing on these areas, CWI aims to mitigate the compounding effects of wildfires. This includes advocating for increased funding for conservation and fuel treatment activities, or in the current climate of DOGE, providing easy pathways to local communities and practitioners to co-manage these landscapes that preserve vital ecosystems and enhance their resilience to fire.

Establish interoperable data standards: Standardized data formats, protocols, and systems should be established to ensure interagency compatibility and facilitate timely and effective knowledge and information sharing across geographies and jurisdictions.

Organization Bio

The Climate and Wildfire Institute's federal policy priorities for the 119th Congress reflect a comprehensive approach to addressing the multifaceted challenges of wildfire management and climate resilience. Through collaboration, innovation, and a commitment to science-based solutions, CWI is dedicated to advancing policies that help communities adapt to fire as a natural part of life while protecting both people and the environment from the devastating impacts of catastrophic wildfires.

¹ <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/how-we-work/policy/wildfire-resilience-policy-roadmap/>

² <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbestechcouncil/2024/02/23/the-role-of-technology-in-wildfire-prevention-and-response/>

³ https://nari.arc.nasa.gov/sites/default/files/attachments/NASA%20ARMD%20WILDFIRE%20MANAGEMENT%20WORKSHOP_6.1.2021_v13.pdf

The Stewardship Project



Expanding Co-Management Authority to Promote the Tribal Right to Steward

Addressing the wildfire crisis must involve engaging Tribes as stewards of the land, but current federal laws impose barriers to Tribes exercising their inherent right to steward. One specific barrier is that existing federal laws limits the ability of federal agencies to enter into effective co-management agreements with Tribes.

Indigenous peoples have engaged in active stewardship of their lands since time immemorial. These traditional stewardship practices include cultural burning: the intentional application of fire to land pursuant to Tribal or Indigenous law for purposes including sustenance, biodiversity, ceremonial, or other purposes. But federal policies often inhibit Tribes' ability to engage in these stewardship practices. Promoting the Tribal right to steward is important both to recognize and support the exercise of Tribes' inherent sovereignty, and as a critical tool to ensure effective stewardship of lands throughout the United States to address the wildfire crisis.

Co-management agreements can enable Tribes to exercise their right to steward.

One tool to effectuate the Tribal right to steward and enable effective land management to address the wildfire crisis is co-management agreements. A co-management agreement allows a Tribe or Tribal organization to partner with federal agencies to engage in joint decision-making and implementation of land management projects. Co-management goes beyond co-stewardship, as co-stewardship generally involves shared implementation of decisions already made by a federal agency, while co-management involves transferred or shared decision-making authority between Tribes and federal, state, and local partners. Co-management agreements should recognize Tribal sovereignty and decision-making authority and must ensure that Tribes have adequate capacity and funding to enter into and implement projects pursuant to these agreements.

Recently, federal policymakers have increasingly recognized the importance of co-management agreements between federal entities and Tribes and acknowledged existing barriers to co-management agreements. However, existing authorities, especially within USDA, authorities are very narrow, and not working as well as they could for Tribes or USFS.

In the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, both Tribal representatives and USFS staff brought forward this concern. This led to Commission Recommendation 30, which recommends:

“Congress should provide the U.S. Department of Agriculture stand-alone authorities to enter into co-management agreements with Tribes that would allow the Forest Service to share, defer or transfer decision-making authority with or to a Tribe or Tribes for management of Forest Service programs or activities.”

To identify avenues to implement this recommendation, USDA sought feedback from Tribes and Tribal organizations, and released the USDA Tribal Consultation on Self-Determination in Forestry Framing Paper and draft policy language at the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) Mid-Year Convention in early June 2024.

The draft policy language would make important changes, including:

- 01** Providing broad authority for USFS to share or transfer decision-making authority across its program areas, including for programs of work rather than just implementation.
- 02** Providing supportive funding to Tribes, including advances and match waivers, to ensure Tribes have adequate capacity to take on activities under co-management agreements.
- 03** Applying broadly to lands with historical, cultural, or geographical relationships to Tribes, rather than including an adjacency requirement.

Passing legislation to expand co-management authority is necessary to address these barriers and promote the Tribal right to steward. The

Farm Bill or separate standalone legislation should include language to expand the authority of the Forest Service and other USDA agencies to enter into meaningful co-management agreements with Tribal entities. Such legislation must ensure tribal entities can hold final decision-making power, with the support and consultation of federal agencies.

This would meaningfully address numerous policy issues. First, this would promote the exercise of Tribal sovereignty by enabling Tribes to make critical decisions about how to steward their ancestral lands. Second, this would build much-needed capacity for USFS, by allowing the agency to work with Tribes to effectively meet the stewardship need. Tribes are effective stewards, often completing the same or better stewardship work with few resources. And Tribes are eager to complete this work, especially near their communities. And third, it would build stronger relationships between Tribes and the federal government. The legislature should seize this opportunity to achieve these critical policy goals and rise to the challenges posed by the ongoing wildfire crisis.

Organization bio

The Stewardship Project is a collaboration of leading academics and tribal cultural practitioners supported by the Climate & Wildfire Institute. This new initiative is intended to promote greater use of active stewardship in the Western United States to address the wildfire crisis. It is critical to realign federal policies in a non-partisan way to prioritize scientifically sound restoration, including Traditional Indigenous Knowledge, and enable greater use of Indigenous practices.

Alliance for Wildfire Resilience



Implementing Policy Solutions to Address Escalating Wildfire Impacts

The wildfire crisis in the United States is urgent, severe, and far reaching.

In the face of these escalating impacts, Congress established the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to review nearly every facet of the wildfire system. Established in 2022, the Commission developed 167 consensus recommendations for Congress to better mitigate and manage wildfire, delivered in two reports. These recommendations provide an important roadmap for improving our wildfire outcomes but much-needed change cannot occur without further Congressional action.

While the Commission completed its congressionally-mandated period of service in March 2024, the opportunity to advance Commission recommendations continues. Using the Commission report as a common playbook to achieve meaningful and lasting change in wildfire policy, the Alliance for Wildfire Resilience (AWR) brings deep institutional knowledge of the Commission process and deliberations to operationalize recommendations. Our mission is to foster partnerships to pursue policy changes to reduce the long-term consequences of wildfires in the United States. We work with partners, policymakers, and thought leaders from across multiple sectors to advance holistic solutions and comprehensive legislation to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from wildfires.

Commission Recommendations as a Foundation for Change

The recommendations contained within the Commission report continue to gain momentum with decision-makers and partners.

In order to achieve the comprehensive and holistic vision set forth by the Commission, additional work is necessary in a number of policy areas. With half of the Commission's 167 recommendations represented in draft legislative text spanning more than a dozen bills, the opportunity is still ripe for offices to craft bills to meet the remaining critical gaps.



Workforce Solutions

The Commission called for both support of the existing wildland firefighting community and expansion of the workforce to better focus on proactive mitigation and risk reduction. More work remains to realize the full scope of recommendations needed to support and expand the necessary workforce to realize change.



Post Fire Recovery

Communities impacted by wildfire need integrated and proactive recovery programs. The post fire period offers an opportunity to rebuild with greater resiliency to future disasters. Congress can act to improve existing programs and support interagency efforts to better coordinate recovery efforts.



Natural Environment Mitigation

Draft legislation includes text focused on expanding the use of beneficial fire, improving wildfire recovery programs, and increasing fuel reduction on federal and private land. There has also been interest in recommendations related to tribal authorities and actions which protect the public during expanded use of fire.

Comprehensive legislative action is essential to prepare for both the wildfires of today and the wildfires of tomorrow.

The Commission created a consensus-based roadmap of needed policy change. It will take support from both partners and the public to ensure that Congress acts on these important, urgent needs to create a fire resilient future. The wildfire crisis cannot be seen as a problem solvable by a single entity or pulse of funding; it is a challenge requiring both collective action and sustained commitment.

Organization Bio

AWR is a collaboration of AWR Research and AWR Action. AWR Research, a fiscally sponsored project of the 501c3 Resources Legacy Fund, provides public education regarding the mission and recommendations of the Commission, as well as nonpartisan research, analysis, and public education on additional policy solutions to America's worsening wildland fire crisis. AWR Action, a fiscally sponsored project of the 501c4 Fund for a Better Future, advocates for wildfire policy reforms through coalition building, strategic communications, and engagement with decision makers.



Outdoor Alliance



Balancing Recreation Access and Forest Resilience in the Pacific Northwest

As wildfire seasons become longer and more intense, fire increasingly affects the outdoor recreation experience and the outdoor economy across the U.S. These effects are especially pronounced in the Pacific Northwest, which is home to some of America's most loved recreation destinations, many of which are on National Forests. Here, the Forest Service is currently working to amend and modernize the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP) to address changing conditions including climate change and wildfire across 24 million acres of iconic forestlands in the Pacific Northwest.

Led by Seattle-based member organization The Mountaineers, Outdoor Alliance and local partners in California, Oregon, and Washington, are working to ensure that the NWFP amendment moves forward in a way that protects recreation values and supports local recreation economies while protecting old growth and mature forests, achieving wildfire resilience goals, and respecting Tribal sovereignty and cultural values. For nearly 30 years, the NWFP has attempted to strike a balance between conservation and timber industry interests on federally-managed lands in Washington, Oregon, and Northern California. But threats and pressures to these forests have changed dramatically since the plan's inception. Wildfires have grown in intensity and range, and scientists and policy-makers have a better understanding of the urgent need to slow and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Outdoor recreation and tourism have also become more important to the economic vitality of communities throughout the Pacific Northwest since the NWFP's inception. GIS analysis by Outdoor Alliance found that the NWFP area includes approximately:

5,922 miles of whitewater paddling opportunities,

10,592 miles of hiking trails,

3,754 miles of biking trails, and

514 climbing sites.

Visitors to these recreation sites are drawn in part to the scenic and other environmental benefits provided by healthy forests. Despite outdoor recreation's importance to the region, the original NWFP lacked specific management direction related to recreation. With changing conditions, it's important that the amended plan addresses the growing demand for outdoor experiences. **Key opportunities include:**

► **Integrate outdoor recreation and fuels**

management: Adapting to warmer, dryer conditions in PNW forests—especially in dry frequent-fire forests east of the Cascade crest—will involve a dramatic increase in the pace and scale of fuel treatments such as thinning and prescribed fire. As the NWFP charts a path forward for this increase, the plan should integrate outdoor recreation, including recreation infrastructure, into both the planning and implementation phases of these projects. Examples include, incorporating recreation assets into project prioritization criteria, enhancing viewsheds, enhancing backcountry ski terrain, rehabilitating trails during fuel treatment implementation, increasing the resilience of trail systems and other recreation infrastructure to high severity fire, and more. The



Wildfires have grown in intensity and range, and scientists and policy-makers have a better understanding of the urgent need to slow and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

NWFP should include plan components encouraging fire and fuel managers to design and implement fuels projects that support these and other co-benefits for recreation access.

► **Fire-related Closures:** In recent years, closures of National Forests to recreational users have become more common in the Pacific Northwest and across the western U.S. Many of these closures are left in place for months or even years after wildfire events and sometimes cover large areas that are entirely unaffected or that otherwise do not warrant closure. Other closures are pre-emptive and close entire areas that are not experiencing wildfires or disturbance events. The NWFP should address fire-related closures by providing direction for land managers to minimize closures to the smallest spatial and temporal extent necessary to protect public safety.

► **Local Communities:** Rural communities throughout the NWFP area rely on outdoor recreation as an important component of their economies and quality of life. The NWFP should articulate a clear vision for how sustainable recreation access on National Forests will continue to benefit these communities into the future. With regards to wildfire, the NWFP should include clear goals to ensure that fire and fuels management activities occur in a way that maintains and enhances recreation access, and encourage land managers to work with communities to reduce unwanted fire starts from recreational users.

► **Post-fire restoration:** As wildfires become more frequent and severe in the Pacific Northwest, their impacts on trails and other recreation infrastructure will likely also grow. The NWFP help recreation managers prepare for future wildfires by including direction for land managers to evaluate and address post-fire impacts to recreation infrastructure and by requiring that trails be repaired to meet agency standards following wildfires.

Organization Bio

Outdoor Alliance is a nonprofit coalition of organizations that includes American Whitewater, American Canoe Association, Access Fund, International Mountain Bicycling Association, Winter Wildlands Alliance, The Mountaineers, American Alpine Club, the Mazamas, Colorado Mountain Club, and Surfrider Foundation. For 10 years, Outdoor Alliance has united the human-powered outdoor recreation community to achieve lasting conservation victories. Our work has helped to permanently protect 40 million acres of public land, secure \$5.1 billion in funding for the outdoors, and convert more than 100,000 outdoor enthusiasts into outdoor advocates. For more information, visit www.outdooralliance.org.





The existing frameworks for combatting the wildfire crisis are not sustainable. The growing costs – to our public and private lands, wildlife and ecosystems, economies, and communities – are already too high.

Strategic leadership and stakeholder coordination is necessary to drive statutory reform and provide expanded resources to fight and prevent catastrophic wildfire. Coalitions need a unified message on the need and demand for comprehensive, bipartisan legislation to improve federal, state, and local coordination, adequately support the workforce, promote mitigation and resilience, and more.

Input from a broad spectrum of expertise and professional backgrounds is necessary to develop and implement effective policies. Engaging the right partners and policymakers is crucial to facilitate a meaningful dialogue and advance effective legislation and regulation.

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