



January 8, 2019

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We are writing to request increased cooperation as our respective states endure more frequent and devastating wildfires with every passing year. The federal government is a major landowner and a critical partner in preventing, fighting, and recovering from wildfires. As we look ahead to the beginning of another fire season in just a few months, we respectfully request immediate attention and increased efforts to responsibly manage the lands owned by federal agencies in our states.

Specifically, we request that you direct the Department of Interior, the Department of Agriculture, and the U.S. Forest Service to double the investment made in managing federal forestlands in California, Washington, and Oregon. In recent years, federal forest management budgets have remained flat, creating a significant gap between funding and need.

Immediate progress can be made by prioritizing funding for projects that have already received environmental review and ensuring that progress is made before summer begins and fire danger increases significantly. Additionally, we request that you prioritize projects adjacent to each of our states' priority areas so we can create synergy between state and federal wildland management efforts.

We are encouraged by Executive Order 13855, which you signed on December 21, 2018, promoting active management of America's forest, rangelands and other federal lands to improve conditions and reduce wildfire risk. However, it is constrained by current appropriations. We all must acknowledge that without significant additional federal investment, these partnerships have too little impact on changing the catastrophic reality of wildfire season on the West Coast.

We stand ready for partnership. Over the past decade our states have partnered with federal agencies to prioritize resilience to wildfire through the Memorandum of Understanding between the Western Governors' Association and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy, and Good Neighbor Authority. We also look forward to working together on the Secretary of Agriculture's new initiative, Shared Stewardship.

Our states have invested heavily in managing our own wildlands, working with private landowners to fire-harden communities, and enhancing our response capabilities. California has committed to a five-year, \$1 billion forest management plan, and has already invested \$111.3

million on forest health since 2017, of which 49 percent was spent on managing federally owned land, while the state doubled the size of its actively managed lands to half a million acres. For this coming biennium, Washington's budget will exceed \$85 million to address forest health, wildland fire projects and suppression, and we expect this number will continue to grow in future biennia. And in Oregon, annual fire-fighting costs have skyrocketed. Since the signing of the state's Good Neighbor Authority Master Agreement in 2016, roughly \$4 million is invested each biennium in accelerating the pace and scale of restoration on federal forest lands.

We are doing what is needed to mitigate fire danger within our own borders. In each of our states, we are adding more and year-round fire crews to acknowledge the reality that fire season no longer lasts just six months. We are investing in cutting-edge technology to detect and fight fires, and we are pioneering new strategies for large-scale forest management projects.

In contrast to all of our state efforts, the U.S. Forest Service has seen its budget cut by more than \$2 billion since 2016.

Our significant state-level efforts will not be as effective without a similar commitment to increased wildland management by you, our federal partners. Since 2017, fires on federally owned lands burned a significantly larger footprint than fires on state-owned lands in California and Oregon. The same is true in Washington, where over 500 fires on federal lands burned more than 150,000 acres during the 2018 fire season.

The stark reality we now face is a longer fire season, driven by multi-year droughts and higher than average temperatures, creating extreme tinderbox conditions across the West Coast. While the up-front costs of responsible lands management create budget pressures, they pale in comparison to the longer-term human and financial costs of doing too little.

Mr. President, public safety is our most important shared responsibility. We hope that the next several months will demonstrate that our governments, in cooperation with federal agencies, can materially improve safety conditions for our residents as the threat of wildfire continues to increase.

Sincerely,



Governor Gavin Newsom
State of California



Governor Kate Brown
State of Oregon



Governor Jay Inslee
State of Washington

CC:

California Congressional Delegation

Oregon Congressional Delegation

Washington Congressional Delegation

Brock Long, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency

Acting Secretary David Bernhardt, U.S. Department of Interior

Vicki Christiansen, Chief, U.S. Forest Service