

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 1, 2019

Lisa Murkowski
Chairman, Interior Subcommittee
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Tom Udall
Ranking Member, Interior Subcommittee
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall,

We are writing regarding the wildfire disaster funding adjustment and to request those savings for fiscal year (FY) 2020 be reinvested and spent as they were originally intended, with the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM).

As you know, the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2018 includes the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (WDFFA), which freezes the congressionally appropriated funding level for wildfire suppression and establishes a Wildfire Disaster Account to fund the cost of wildfire suppression above the appropriated amount. The creation of this new disaster account is designed to save the Forest Service and BLM hundreds of millions of dollars per year in wildfire suppression costs. For FY 2020 -- the year WDFFA takes effect -- the Wildfire Disaster Account should allow the agencies to save approximately \$650 million.

For over a decade, the growing costs of wildfire suppression forced these agencies to borrow billions of non-wildfire funds to pay for wildfire suppression, which consistently meant less hazardous fuels thinning, less forest management, and a growing maintenance backlog. The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act will liberate \$650 million dollars in FY2020, which we believe should be reinvested in the Forest Service and BLM -- as the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act intended. Therefore, in order to get the agencies back to work in the woods and on the rangeland, we request that you reinvest the full amount of WDFFA savings back in the Forest Service and BLM.

Thank you for considering our request.

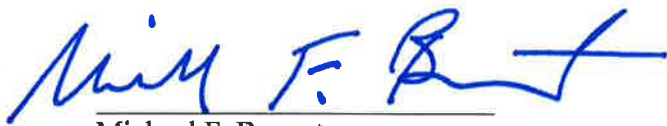
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



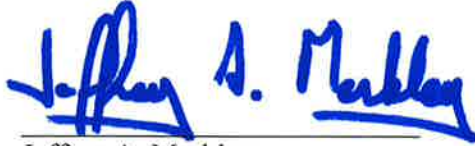
Mike Crapo
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Mitt Romney
United States Senator