

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

September 8, 2017

The Honorable Tony Tooke
Chief, United States Forest Service
Sidney R. Yates Building
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Chief Tooke:

Welcome to your new position as Chief of the U.S. Forest Service. You take this job at a moment of extreme crisis in Oregon and across the West. In Oregon, we know a thing or two about growing trees, the timber industry, and environmental values. Unfortunately, we also know a lot about wildfire and we need your help. We hope you will focus on helping Oregon navigate the various issues that are the bedrock of our forested communities and a large portion of our economy.

Right now, we have an emergency in Oregon. We have 18 active large fires and have had 61 large fires this year. Despite the fact that nine states in the West, including Oregon, are in states of emergency due to fire, according to the National Interagency Fire Center, Oregon alone accounts for nearly one-third of the 1.5 million currently burning acres in the West.

Our governor informed us that she asked for additional help from the administration, through a conversation with Secretary Perdue. Her point was to ask for an “all-hands-on-deck” approach to fires in this extremely uncharacteristically hot year in Oregon, specifically asking for hot shot crews and further aviation support. This request clearly predates your arrival in your new post, so we reiterate it here: when it comes to national forest management in Oregon, we need the full attention of the administration, including the full cooperation of the U.S. Forest Service.

We know that fire suppression is the primary focus of your agency at the moment, but it is clear that there simply are not enough firefighting resources available to meet the needs of all of the fires currently burning. We ask you to be creative and assertive in expanding the pool of resources available to fight the fires, including advocating with other agencies and the White House as appropriate. We stand ready to back up any requests you have that can bring the needed logistics.

We have just secured funding, passed by Congress this week in the Continuing Resolution, which will allow the Forest Service to serve Oregon and the West during this conflagration. These funds will allow the Forest Service to refill some of the land management coffers that we understand will be borrowed from any day now.

As the fires are contained, the next big hurdle will be ensuring the agencies have enough money for what will most likely be the largest Burned Area Emergency Recovery effort in your

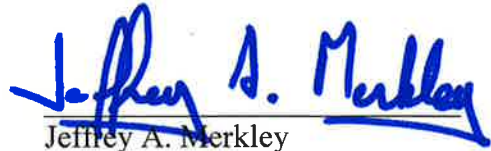
agency's history. Preserving our water and protecting our forest soils is critical for our recovery from these catastrophic fire events.

We are actively pursuing funding for the U.S. Forest Service in any bill before Congress intended to help communities recover from Hurricane Harvey and other natural disasters. We look to you to help us hone those requests and make them as targeted as possible to help our communities and our lands recover from this soon-to-be record-setting fire year.

Sincerely,



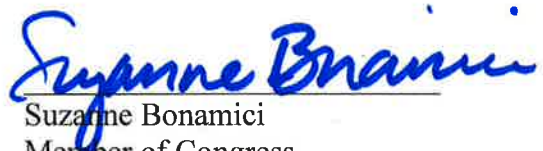
Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
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Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
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Greg Walden
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