

March 29, 2018

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2256 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chair Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum:

As researchers, extension unit leaders, and practitioners who work with the federal land management agencies on wildland fire, we urge you to maintain and fully fund the Joint Fire Science Program at historical levels of \$6.914 million annually through the USDA Forest Service's Wildland Fire Management and \$5.9 million annually through the US Department of Interior Wildland Fire Management. Wildland fire is occurring over more acres at greater severity than in the past. Fire seasons are lengthening, exposing communities to greater risk from fire, post-fire floods, and smoke. The need for science is greater than ever to support strategic allocation of resources to meet the goals of the National Cohesive Strategy—restoring and maintaining fire-adapted landscapes, promoting fire-adapted communities, and fostering safe and effective response to fire.

The Joint Fire Science Program model for funding critical research, based on management priorities and with requirements for active science delivery, makes the program uniquely valuable and the only one of its kind. No other program offers researchers the opportunity to address fire management challenges in direct response to manager priorities. Based on direction from Congress, the program is a partnership of six federal land management agencies that work together to identify and address problems associated with managing wildland fuels, fires, and fire-impacted ecosystems. Fire and land managers from the USDA Forest Service and US Department of Interior together identify issues of critical interest, competitively allocate funding to researchers to tackle those issues via applied research, and require active delivery of science to managers and policymakers, linking science to management.

With a relatively limited budget, the Joint Fire Science Program has improved efficacy and accountability of agency activities by funding research to address important topics. Past research has focused on such salient issues as understanding smoke impacts to communities, overcoming barriers to prescribed fire, identifying how drivers of fire costs affect decision making, analyzing fire behavior, and understanding fire effects on resources and communities. The program supports regional Fire Science Consortia that support science delivery to the management and practitioner communities. Research and science delivery under this program have proven valuable for both federal land managers and partner organizations working to restore fire-adapted landscapes and promote fire-adapted communities.

We ask Congress to reject the Administration's proposal to cancel the Joint Fire Science Program and request you maintain the Joint Fire Science Program at its past funding levels. Further, it is important that the program remain funded from within the Forest Service's Wildland Fire budget, rather than from Forest Service Research. Embedding the program in an already constrained research budget undercuts this successful model of a management-driven research program that responds directly to the challenges of wildland fire. We thank Congress for its past support of the Joint Fire Science Program and ask you to continue to make a priority of this important science-management partnership.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to contact Cassandra Moseley (cmoseley@uoregon.edu) or Courtney Schultz (Courtney.Schultz@colostate.edu).

Membership organization and coalition signatories

Coalition of Prescribed Fire Councils
Forest Stewards Guild
National Association of State Foresters
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
Society of American Foresters

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Signatories by state

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