

Wildfires/IRA Funding Freeze

Dear Secretary Rollins, Secretary Burgum, and Secretary Noem:

The United States is grappling with a wildfire crisis. We no longer face wildfire seasons but wildfires year-round, as evidenced by the ongoing wildfires in Southern California, which occurred far outside of the traditional fire season. These fires highlight the need for a renewed, year-round, and comprehensive focus – paired with significant investments – in wildfire mitigation and community defense.

We are concerned about the implications of President Trump’s recent Executive Order “Unleashing American Energy,” that paused wildfire mitigation and other spending from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act, along with other orders that unlawfully halt Congressionally-appropriated programs across the federal government.

In the past several years, Congress invested more than \$15 billion through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act to keep communities safe by restoring healthy forest ecosystems, reducing hazardous fuels that increase the intensity and speed of wildfires, providing planning resources to at-risk communities, and increasing pay for federal wildland firefighters. Any efforts by the federal government to illegally withdraw these investments in community safety and wildfire preparedness are a massive disservice to our constituents, ecosystems, watersheds, national security, and wildland firefighters on the frontlines.

The ongoing pause in federal disbursements is particularly alarming for federal, state, local, and other collaborative efforts to manage hazardous fuels, suppress and mitigate wildfires, and strengthen community resilience and preparedness. We are already hearing reports about the impacts of President Trump’s funding pause on our ability to prepare for catastrophic wildfire—especially now as our federal firefighters attempt to staff up for the upcoming fire season. One official warned that, “the inability to have workforce onboarded and ready to respond is going to have a negative impact on suppression efforts across the West... It’s having immediate impacts.”

The potential consequences of the President’s efforts to withhold these critical investments to the communities and lands that need them in a timely manner and as directed by Congress are grave. Without urgent corrective action from this administration, we will be less safe, less prepared, and more vulnerable to extreme wildfire threats.

Therefore, by February 15, 2025, please provide the following:

1. An inventory of all the federal funding and assistance programs across the Departments of Agriculture, Interior, and Homeland Security that the Administration has currently paused that are related to:
 - Hazardous fuels management or other wildfire mitigation activities;

- State, local, tribal, and community collaboration on wildfire mitigation;
 - Community resilience and preparedness activities, including home hardening and defensible space;
 - Firefighter training, enhanced benefits, or casualty assistance programs;
 - Wildfire research and science associated with managing wildland fire, fuels, and fire impacts to ecosystems and communities;
 - Any other programs related to wildfire;
2. A list of projects related to the programs listed in question #1 whose implementation or operation was altered in any way after the release of OMB's now-rescinded January 27, 2025 memo; physical addresses or geographic coordinates for each project; an explanation of how implementation of those projects was changed after January 27, 2025; the number of people that resigned, refused job offers, or were laid off from the projects after January 27, 2025; the total number of acres that were not treated or for which treatment was delayed after January 27, 2025; a list of programs that resumed implementation after the memo was rescinded; and a list of the programs that continue to be paused;
 3. An explanation of how your agency, in collaboration with other impacted Federal agencies described in question #1, is monitoring how the President's Executive Orders are impacting wildfire readiness, community preparedness, or hazardous fuels management goals; and
 4. A timeline for your plans to resume implementation and disbursement of agency processing and funding for programs described in question #1.

The urgent and timely need for action on wildfire preparedness and mitigation cannot be overstated. Any delay in funding and implementation of critical programs threatens the safety and resilience of our communities, ecosystems, and firefighters. We look forward to your prompt response and remain ready to work together to address this escalating crisis with the necessary resources and commitment.