

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 29, 2022

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2162 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2065 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

As you begin work on the FY (Fiscal Year) 2023 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we urge to fund the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP) at \$20 million, with \$10 million provided to the Department of Interior Wildland Fire Management budget and \$10 million provided to the USDA Forest Service.

In FY 2018, JFSP funding was cut in half, eliminating funding for nearly all fire science research under the program. We thank you for maintaining partial funding for JFSP over the last several years and for the \$2 million increase for FY 22, bringing funding to \$8 million.

We respectfully urge the Committee to build on the FY22 investments in JFSP to better meet the nation's need to combat the increasing frequency and severity of wildfire, which now threatens all regions of the country. There is an urgent need to address the nation's fire management and science needs by increasing funding for JFSP to \$20 million.

The wildfire season is growing longer and wildfires are becoming more severe. Now more than ever we need to ensure that fire and forest managers, emergency responders, and communities have cutting edge science to tackle this growing problem. The JFSP funds the best scientists in the nation to conduct critical research on the science, management, and policy of wildland fire. There is no other significant source of funding for extramural fire-related research, making the JFSP uniquely valuable and the only one of its kind.

Based on direction from Congress, the JFSP is a partnership of six federal land management agencies that work together to identify and address the most pressing challenges of managing wildland fuels, fires, and fire-impacted ecosystems. Fire and land managers from the USDA Forest Service and US Department of Interior together to: 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. No other program funds applied research to address the nation's fire management challenges, for which we must augment investment given the projected increased in fire and fire-related impacts.

With a relatively limited budget, the Joint Fire Science Program has improved efficacy and accountability of agency research and management by directing university and federal researchers to address topics of critical importance. Past JFSP projects have 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, the effectiveness of fuels treatments, and understanding fire effects on forests 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 urge you to increase funding for the scientific research that has been conducted under the JFSP and that undergirds the efforts of the Consortia. Thank you again for your consideration of our request to support our nation's urgent need to address the challenges of fire management and the threat it poses to our forests, grasslands, watersheds, and communities.

We are grateful for your leadership in this arena and for continuing to ensure science-driven, effective, and accountable land management.

Sincerely,

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