



December 15, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Senate Majority Leader  
The Honorable Charles Schumer, Senate Minority Leader  
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, House Minority Leader

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

The National Association of Forest Service Retirees (NAFSR) and the Public Lands Foundation (PLF) very strongly support the December 8, 2020 letter to you from thirty Senators and Representatives requesting an additional stimulus package to deal with the impacts of COVID-19. We believe it is critical to include emergency support for communities recovering from record breaking wildfires. The 2020 wildfire season forced thousands of evacuations, threatened air and water quality, and destroyed homes and businesses across the West. We also believe Congress must invest in land management agencies to prevent further disastrous wildfires.

NAFSR and PLF represent U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management retirees with thousands of years of experience across every state who have cared for the nation's forests and grasslands. We care deeply about the management and use of the natural resources which make our nation strong. Our memberships span the entire spectrum of natural resource professionals and researchers. We stay strongly connected to the health of the National Forests and BLM managed public lands, the communities they serve, and the capacity of the U.S. Forest Service and BLM to meet their responsibilities.

The subject letter urged you to make investments in several initiatives that would support the short and long-term recovery of local communities impacted by both COVID-19 and a historic wildfire season. We also believe Congress must invest in land management agencies to prevent further catastrophic wildfires.

Specifically, NAFSR and PLF stand solidly behind the request for the following initiatives:

**Local Economic Relief:**

**Investments in Fire Risk Mitigation:**

- 21st Century Conservation Corps
- USFS and BLM - Hazardous Fuels
- USFS - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration Program
- USFS - Vegetation and Watershed Management
- USFS - Water Source Protection Program
- USFS - Landscape Scale Restoration
- USFS - National Fire Capacity (previously State Fire Assistance)

**Fire Recovery Efforts:**

- USDA - Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) Program
- Long Term Investment in the U.S. Forest Service and BLM

Congress has the responsibility and authority to help these communities recover, and to make federal investments in sustainable forest management to fully prepare for the next wildfire season. We urge you to consider the timely need for wildfire mitigation, suppression, and recovery in the next COVID-19 recommended stimulus package.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration of our professional recommendations.

Sincerely,

*James L. Caswell*

James L. Caswell, Chair  
National Association of Forest Service Retirees

*Edward W. Shepard*

Edward W. Shepard, President  
Public Lands Foundation