

July 26, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
U.S. Senate Majority Leader
S-230 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
U.S. Senate Minority Leader
419 Hart Senate Office Building, Room
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

Our organizations want to express our strong support for Amendment # 3540, introduced by Senator Heller, to the Interior Appropriations Bill, which allows for an increase of \$5 million within existing hazardous fuels management funding on state and private lands which directly adjoin federal forest lands. This amendment would not impact the overall funding appropriated for the hazardous fuels management account.

Wildfires know no boundaries. It is often the case that wildfires begin on federal forests and threaten private lands or on private lands and threaten federal forests. Focusing more hazardous fuels management funding on projects which protect both sides of the boundaries will be most helpful. Hazardous fuels management work not only slows the spread of wildfires and reduces impacts to residual forests and adjoining communities, it also provides areas where firefighters can safely operate to battle oncoming wildfires.

Both the House and Senate Farm Bills include language to increase the authorized amount of funding for cross boundary hazardous fuels management treatments on adjoining state and private lands. This amendment is consistent with the intentions expressed in both versions of the Farm Bill. We urge the Senate to adopt this amendment.

Sincerely,

National Association of State Foresters

American Forest Foundation

International Association of Fire Chiefs

National Volunteer Firefighter Council

National Association of Counties