



Office of the Secretary  
Washington, DC 20250

July 27, 2023

THE HONORABLE JEFFREY A. MERKLEY  
*Chairman*  
*Senate Committee on Appropriations*  
*Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,*  
*and Related Agencies*  
*United States Senate*  
*125 Hart Senate Office Building*  
*Washington, DC 20510*

Dear Chairman Merkley:

The U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service projects that it will exhaust all wildfire suppression operations funding in its Wildland Fire Management account within 30 days. When that occurs, transfer from the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund will be needed to ensure continuity of operations.

Pursuant to Public Law 117–328, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2023, amounts appropriated to the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund may be transferred to, and merged, with funding for wildfire suppression operations in the Forest Service Wildland Fire Management account, “upon the notification of the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations that all wildfire suppression operations funds appropriated under that heading in this and prior appropriations Acts to the agency to which the funds will be transferred will be obligated within 30 days.”

The statute authorizes the transfer of funds upon notification of the Committees, and this letter serves as my notice that the Forest Service anticipates that all available wildfire suppression operations funds will be obligated within 30 days, and therefore, plans to make transfers from the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund.

If you have questions, please have a member of your staff reach out to the Office of Congressional Relations at (202) 720–7095. A similar letter is being sent to Ranking Member Lisa Murkowski.

Sincerely,

THOMAS J. VILSACK  
*Secretary*