NOVEMBER 21, 2016

The Honorable Mitch McConnell U.S. Senate Senate Office Building Russell 317 Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Harry Reid U.S. Senate Senate Office Building Hart 522 Washington, D.C. 20510 The Honorable Paul Ryan U.S. House of Representatives House Office Building Longworth 1233 Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi U.S. House of Representatives House Office Building Cannon 233 Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Reid, Speaker Ryan, and Democratic Leader Pelosi,

The undersigned organizations represent the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, comprised of a diverse group of international, national, and local organizations. The caucus seeks a comprehensive solution to the wildfire suppression funding issue. As Congress considers solving the fire funding challenge during the lame-duck session, we urge Congress to ensure that the solution is comprehensive in solving the borrowing issue *and* the erosion of budgets due to increasing wildfire suppression costs.

Many proposals under consideration would ban the practice of transferring additional funds when appropriated funding is spent, but that's only a partial fix in addressing the impacts from rising wildland firefighting costs. These proposals do not address the larger problem of shifting funding from non-fire programs to fire programs, which results from the way firefighting funds are calculated, budgeted, and allocated. As that ten-year average is used to calculate suppression increases, and as budgets remain relatively flat, less is available for forest management and restoration, research, recreation, and other critical private and public land objectives.

A comprehensive fire funding fix would 1) address the continued erosion of agency budgets that results from the increasing ten-year average, and stabilize the level of funding for suppression within the agencies; 2) access disaster funding for extraordinarily costly fires, including those that may be calculated as part of the ten-year average; and 3) significantly reduce the need to transfer from non-suppression accounts and programs. To meet all these criteria, we recommend any fire funding proposal be amended to fund suppression at 70 percent of the ten-year average, similar to the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, or alternatively, to freeze the ten-year average and access disaster funding for levels beyond that amount. We additionally support accountability measures to ensure cost containment.

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Thank you for your consideration and for addressing this important discussion of wildfire suppression funding challenges. It is critical that Congress take action this year to solve this critical issue. We look forward to continuing to work together to come to a comprehensive solution.

Sincerely,

Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solution

List of 129 Partner Caucus Signers:

- 1. Access Fund
- 2. AMERICAN ALPINE CLUB
- 3. AMERICAN CANOE ASSOCIATION
- 4. AMERICAN FOREST FOUNDATION
- 5. AMERICAN FORESTS
- 6. AMERICAN HIKING SOCIETY
- 7. AMERICAN YOUTHWORKS
- 8. APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB
- 9. ARID LAND INNOVATION
- 10. ARIZONA CONSERVATION CORPS
- 11. ASSOCIATION OF CALIFORNIA WATER AGENCIES
- 12. BACK COUNTRY HORSEMEN OF NORTH CAROLINA
- 13. Blue Goose Alliance
- 14. BLUE MOUNTAINS FOREST PARTNERS
- 15. BOONE AND CROCKETT CLUB
- 16. BOULDER COUNTY
- 17. BURNEY-HAT CREEK COMMUNITY FORESTRY AND WATERSHED GROUP CFLR
- 18. BRL LOGGING
- 19. CALIFORNIA SKI INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
- 20. CHOOSE OUTDOORS
- 21. CLEARWATER RESOURCE COUNCIL
- 22. COLORADO YOUTH CORPS ASSOCIATION
- 23. COLUMBIA LAND TRUST
- 24. COMMUNITY TRAINING WORKS, INC. AKA YOUNG AMERICAN CONSERVATION CORPS
- 25. Conservation Legacy
- 26. Conservation Northwest
- 27. DEFENDERS OR WILDLIFE
- 28. EAST JEFFERSON FIRE AND RESCUE, WA
- 29. ECOSYSTEM MANAGEMENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE

For information regarding this letter or members of the Partner Caucus on Fire Suppression Funding Solutions, please contact Cecilia Clavet, cclavet@tnc.org, 703-841-7425.

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- 30. ECOSYSTEM WORKFORCE PROGRAM
- 31. ENVIRONMENTAL AND ENERGY STUDY INSTITUTE
- 32. FLATHEAD ECONOMIC POLICY CENTER
- 33. FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY
- 34. FOREST BUSINESS NETWORK
- 35. FOREST ENERGY CORPORATION
- 36. FOREST STEWARDS GUILD
- 37. FOUR FOREST RESTORATION INITIATIVE (4FRI) STAKE HOLDER GROUP
- 38. Framing Our Community
- 39. Friends of the Urban Forest
- 40. GEORGIA FORESTWATCH
- 41. GILA WOODNET
- 42. Great Appalachian Valley Conservation Corps
- 43. Greater Flagstaff Forests Partnership
- 44. HOOSIER ENVIRONMENTAL COUNCIL
- 45. IDAHO CONSERVATION LEAGUE
- 46. IDAHO FOREST OWNERS ASSOCIATION
- 47. IDAHO FOREST RESTORATION PARTNERSHIP
- 48. INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR
- 49. INDIANA FORESTRY & WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
- 50. LAKE COUNTY RESOURCES INITIATIVE
- 51. Lassen Forest Preservation
- 52. LITTLE COLORADO RIVER PLATEAU RC&D AREA, INC.
- 53. LOUISIANA FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
- 54. MONTANA CONSERVATION CORPS
- 55. MONTANA WILDERNESS ASSOCIATION
- 56. MOTTEK CONSULTING
- 57. Mt. Taylor Manufacturing
- 58. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONSERVATION DISTRICTS
- 59. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FOREST SERVICE RETIREES
- 60. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RV PARKS & CAMPGROUNDS
- 61. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS
- 62. NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY FOREST RESOURCES PROGRAMS
- 63. NATIONAL FEDERATION OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES
- 64. NATIONAL FOREST HOMEOWNERS
- 65. NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
- 66. NATIONAL SKI AREAS ASSOCIATION
- 67. NATIONAL WILDFIRE INSTITUTE
- 68. NATIONAL WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
- 69. New Mexico Forest Industry Association
- 70. NORTH CAROLINA HORSE COUNCIL
- 71. NORTH CENTRAL WASHINGTON FOREST HEALTH COLLABORATIVE

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- 72. NORTHERN FOREST CENTER
- 73. NORTHWEST YOUTH CORPS
- 74. OUTDOOR ALLIANCE
- 75. OUTDOOR INDUSTRY ASSOCIATION
- 76. PARTNERSHIP FOR THE NATIONAL TRAILS SYSTEM
- 77. PINCHOT INSTITUTE FOR CONSERVATION
- 78. Project Wildfire
- 79. PUBLIC LANDS ALLIANCE
- 80. Public Lands Foundation
- 81. PUBLIC LANDS PARTNERSHIP
- 82. QUAIL AND UPLAND WILDLIFE FEDERATION
- 83. QUALITY DEER MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
- 84. RESTORATION TECHNOLOGIES
- 85. ROCKY MOUNTAIN YOUTH CORPS
- 86. ROOT CAUSE
- 87. RUFFED GROUSE SOCIETY
- 88. SALMON VALLEY STEWARDSHIP
- 89. SIERRA BUSINESSMAN COUNCIL
- 90. SIERRA CLUB
- 91. SIERRA FOREST LEGACY
- 92. SIERRA INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT
- 93. SIUSLAW INSTITUTE
- 94. SOCIETY OF AMERICAN FORESTERS
- 95. SOUTH DAKOTA ATV/UTV ASSOCIATION
- 96. SOUTH FOREST SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIP
- 97. SOUTHEAST CONSERVATION CORPS
- 98. SOUTHERN ENVIRONMENTAL LAW CENTER
- 99. SOUTHERN OREGON CLIMATE ACTION NOW
- 100. SOUTHERN OREGON FOREST RESTORATION COLLABORATIVE
- 101. SOUTHWEST CONSERVATION CORPS
- 102. STUDENT CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION
- 103. SUSTAINABLE NORTHWEST
- 104. SWAN VALLEY CONNECTIONS
- 105. SYCAMORE LAND TRUST, INC.
- 106. TEXAS CONSERVATION CORPS
- 107. TEXAS FORESTRY ASSOCIATION
- 108. THE CORPS NETWORK
- 109. THE LANDS COUNCIL
- 110. THE MOUNTAIN PACT
- 111. THE MOUNTAINEERS
- 112. THE NATURE CONSERVANCY
- 113. THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

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- 114. THE WILDLIFE SOCIETY
- 115. THEODORE ROOSEVELT CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP
- 116. TRIPLE R RANCH, SD
- 117. TROUT UNLIMITED
- 118. TULEYOME
- 119. VAIL RESORTS
- 120. VERMONT WOODLANDS ASSOCIATION
- 121. WALLOWA RESOURCES
- 122. WASHINGTON DEPARTMENT OF FISH & WILDLIFE
- 123. WASHINGTON TRAILS ASSOCIATION
- 124. WATERSHED RESEARCH & TRAINING CENTER
- 125. WILDLIFE FOREVER
- 126. WILDLIFE MISSISSIPPI
- 127. WINTER WILDLANDS ALLIANCE
- 128. WISCONSIN WOODLAND OWNERS ASSOCIATION
- 129. WYOMING STOCK GROWERS ASSOCIATION