

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 14, 2018

The Honorable Paul Ryan  
Speaker  
H-232, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Minority Leader  
H-204, U.S. Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

As you continue to negotiate a final spending bill for the 2018 fiscal year, we strongly urge you to include language to fix the way Congress funds wildfire suppression and fuels management efforts. Since 2000, we have seen prolonged fire seasons with the frequency and size of fires also rising. This has led to an increase in the amount of spending drastically needed for fire suppression activities. In turn, the United States Forest Service (USFS) has continuously exceeded the amount of funds appropriated to fight wildfires, which has come at the expense of other programs that reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and increase the ability of land to recover from these disasters.

This past year alone was the most expensive year on record. The USFS spent a record \$2.4 billion on wildfire suppression, requiring \$527 million in transfers from other accounts within the USFS. While the transfer of funds is generally repaid in subsequent appropriations bills, this is a disruptive practice that impedes land management agencies from doing potentially life-saving mitigation activities that would reduce the risks of wildfires. It means the USFS can't do prescribed burns, fuels management, or insect control because Congress has failed to provide a mechanism to adequately fund the agency and provide certainty for them to move forward with fire mitigation activities.

Unfortunately, the impacts of these wildfires are widespread. In 2017, there were 14 federal firefighter fatalities. This past year, the Thomas Fire became the largest fire in California's history—burning nearly 282,000 acres and triggering mudslides that claimed the lives of 23 individuals.

Again, we ask that any final spending bill for FY18 include language that would address this issue. We stand ready to provide any assistance. This is a fix that is overdue and we need to address.

Sincerely,

  
SALUD O. CARBAJAL  
Member of Congress

  
JULIA BROWNLEY  
Member of Congress

  
JIMMY PANETTA  
Member of Congress