



The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Homer Wilkes
Under Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Randy Moore
Chief
U.S. Forest Service
201 14th St. S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20227

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Susan Collins
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Kay Granger
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Simpson
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable James Comer
Chair
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chair
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Raul Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515



"Nothing About Us, Without Us"



Sept 20, 2023

The Grassroots Wildland Firefighters exist as an advocacy group for the federal wildland workforce across all land management agencies. We are guided and directed by our identified pillars.

1. Wildland Firefighter classification, pay, and benefits
2. Comprehensive health and wellbeing
3. Expanded workforce for expanded seasons
4. Federal Wildland Fire Service

Both House and Senate Appropriations committees have written that they are awaiting the passage of the necessary authorization bill to permanently fix the wildland firefighter pay issue. The debate over the remaining funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) is a distraction that is being used to conjure false narratives; one of administrative mismanagement and the other that the federal wildland workforce is not facing a fiscal cliff. Rather than act to address the crisis at hand, the arguments being raised seek to avoid accountability for the lack of leadership that could bring thousands of wildland firefighters to the brink of a pay cliff. The pay supplements provided by BIL are terminal, and the fiscal cliff is fast approaching across the USDA Forest Service and the Department of Interior (DOI) agencies responsible for managing federal wildland firefighters.

Grassroots Wildland Firefighters have provided holistic permanent solutions over the past two years since the BIL was passed. We implore the Secretaries of the USDA and DOI to remain steadfast and visionary in their support of permanent reforms to implement needed reforms for the future of the federal wildland fire workforce. Wildland Firefighter classification, pay, and benefits are our highest priorities. The funding for pay corrections afforded by BIL funds to which thousands of wildland personnel are entitled need to remain. The Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act is the anchor point for these initial reforms. Additionally, the comprehensive health and wellbeing of the federal wildland firefighter workforce can no longer be sacrificed without long term personal consequences. Workforce and systemic reforms must become congressional and administrative priorities in order to transform 21st century solutions for the next 50 years of our wildfire crisis. We strongly urge USDA Forest Service and Department of Interior Leaders to hold the line on their support of permanent reforms for the federal wildland workforce.

To reiterate, the federal wildland firefighter workforce can no longer be sacrificed without long term and catastrophic consequences. Workforce and systemic reforms must become congressional and administrative priorities.



"Nothing About Us, Without Us"



Regardless of the color of the truck or uniform, when wildland fire personnel arrive on scene, the public's expectations are considered a high public trust. Similarly, the expectations of federal wildland firefighters remain the same; urgent, permanent, holistic changes to address long-needed reforms to stem high attrition and low recruitment. The time for stonewalling and temporary patches are over. The federal wildland fire workforce is in high demand with other state and private agencies, and firefighters are being hired away from the federal government in record numbers. Without permanent change to address necessary, comprehensive reforms, the workforce will not be able to respond to the wildfire crisis that is at the front door of nearly every American citizen, and the American public will pay the ultimate price of inaction. If permanent pay reform is not achieved, Congress is asking the federal wildland workforce and their families **to jump off the fiscal cliff**. Congress is asking them to decide between the well-being of themselves and their families or responding to the call of service. To ask this of our emergency responders is not only out of alignment with the values of the USDA Forest Service and the DOI, but it is in direct opposition to the values upon which this country was founded and still claims to hold.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "LM", followed by a long horizontal line.

Lucas Mayfield
President
Grassroots Wildland Firefighters



"Nothing About Us, Without Us"