



**CWSF**  
COUNCIL OF WESTERN  
STATE FORESTERS

## Legislative & Policy Update – July 25, 2018

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The [Council of Western State Foresters \(CWSF\) Legislative & Policy Update](#) provides information on issues of importance to the CWSF. Policy and Legislative Updates are found on the CWSF webpage [here](#). Please note that the items highlighted in these updates are only a selection of the issues the CWSF and Western Forestry Leadership Coalition (WFLC) are monitoring. Keep an eye out for our monthly newsletter that will provide summaries on other key legislative and programmatic issues. If you have not yet subscribed, you can do so [here](#).

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This month's policy section provides brief updates on the progress of the House and Senate fiscal year (FY) 2019 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies (Interior) bills, and House and Senate activity to negotiate a final Farm Bill. Additionally, it details the announcement of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative, and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry hearing on the nomination of James E. Hubbard to be the Undersecretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment.

### FY 2019 Appropriations

On July 19, the House [voted](#) 217-199 to pass a two-bill [minibus](#) that included the FY 2019 Interior appropriations bill (H.R. 6147) and the Financial Services and General Government appropriations bill (H.R. 6258). Details on the FY 2019 Interior bill that, in part, funds the USDA Forest Service were shared in the [CWSF May 2018 policy update](#). Over 80 [amendments](#) were considered for the minibus with a small portion of them related to forestry issues. Several of the forestry amendments that passed include:

- Rep. Welch (D-Vermont), which increases and decreases the State and Private Forestry account by \$5 million to indicate that the amount should be used to help mitigate the spread of the Emerald Ash Borer.
- Rep. Jackson Lee (R-Texas), which prohibits the use of funds to eliminate or restrict programs aimed at reforestation of urban areas.
- Rep. Ruiz (D-California), which increases the State and Private Forestry account by \$2 million to add funding for the Volunteer Fire Assistance program, and decrease Wildland Fire Management account by the same amount.

The [Senate](#) began floor consideration of a four-bill minibus this week that includes the FY 2019 Interior bill, Financial Services and General Government bill, Agriculture bill, and Transportation, Housing and Urban Development bill. The Senate FY 2019 Interior [bill](#) proposes \$35.85 billion in funding, while the House

version totals \$35.3 billion. Details on proposed funding of programs in the Senate FY 2019 Interior bill were shared in the [July 6 CWSF policy update](#).

## 2018 Farm Bill

On July 18, the House took formal steps to go to conference with the Senate to reconcile differences between the [House](#) and [Senate](#) versions of the Farm Bill. Following that action, House leadership announced 47 representatives to the Farm Bill conference committee, including the following representatives from western states:

### [Republican](#)

- Roger Marshall (KS), House Agriculture Committee
- Chairman Ed Royce (CA), House Foreign Affairs Committee
- Chairman Rob Bishop (UT), House Natural Resources Committee
- Jeff Denham (CA), House Transportation and Infrastructure

### [Democrat](#)

- Jim Costa (CA), House Agriculture Committee
- Michelle Lujan Grisham (NM), House Agriculture Committee
- Tom O'Halleran (AZ), House Agriculture Committee
- Maxine Waters (CA), House Financial Services Committee
- Raul Grijalva (AZ), House Natural Resources Committee

The Senate will need to take similar steps to go to conference with the House. It's expected that the chamber will take those steps as early as this week and will identify Senate conferees. Senate Agriculture Committee Chairman Pat Roberts, (R-KS) expressed preparedness by the Senate to bring the Farm Bill to conference, [stating](#), "We are pleased to see the House move ahead on the Farm Bill. We are eager to go to conference, so we can move quickly to provide certainty for American farmers and families. Rural America is counting on us to get this right."

## Senate Agriculture Committee Hearing on Nomination of James E. Hubbard

On July 24, the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition and Forestry held a [hearing](#) on the nomination of James (Jim) E. Hubbard to be the Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment position. Hubbard's nomination comes with over 40 years of forestry experience, working in the Forest Service for 11 years, and working with the Colorado State Forest Service for 34 years.

In the hearing, Hubbard expressed strong support for the Good Neighbor Authority, and stated the need for further agreement on fire response, risk mitigation and hazard reduction across boundary lines. Hubbard further pledged to be a strong leader in harassment reduction throughout the agency. One of Hubbard's objectives is to increase collaboration across state and federal lines, approaching states to understand state priorities and where to invest the right tools for active management. In particular, sharing decision space with the stakeholders and state to get projects completed.

Chairman Pat Roberts (R-Kan) announced that results from the Committee hearing will be released within the near future. The [National Association of State Foresters](#) supports Jim Hubbard's nomination and urges the confirmation of his appointment as quickly as possible.

### **WGA Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative**

On July 12, the WGA 2019 Chairman, Hawaii Gov. David Ige, announced the Biosecurity and Invasive Species Initiative in a [webinar](#). In his opening remarks, Gov. Ige emphasized the importance of the initiative, stating "Invasive species continues to be one of the biggest challenges facing the West and country, impacts are significant, nature conservancy estimates \$120 billion in costs for invasive species management."

The initiative focuses on the impacts of nuisance species pests and pathogens on ecosystems in the West, and developing technical tools and guidelines for invasive species scenarios, including the creation of a WGA invasive species management protocol and technical tools for monitoring the species such as database sharing.

The data gathered from this project will be used to create an invasive species list, published with invasive species threats from each WGA member state. Through collaboration and best practice sharing for management, the initiative aims to prevent future threat while mitigating current threat, and using the findings of the project to engage with Congress and the presidential administration to guide future policy. The webinar included announcements of four regional workshops for the year, which will be followed by a series of targeted webinars:

- Nevada (Sep. 17-18)
- Wyoming (Oct. 11-12)
- Montana (Nov. 11)
- Hawaii (Dec. 12)