



## Legislative & Policy Update – February 2020

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The [Council of Western State Foresters \(CWSF\) Legislative & Policy Update](#) provides information on issues of importance to 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 CWSF and the 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](#). For more information, please contact Danielle Okst, Associate Policy and Grants Director at [dokst@westernforesters.org](mailto:dokst@westernforesters.org).

The fiscal year (FY) 2021 appropriations process began this month with the release of the President's budget request, indicating policy and funding priorities for this Administration. Democrats unveiled the draft legislative text for the Climate Leadership and Environmental Action for our Nation's (CLEAN) Future Act and, from the other side of the aisle, the "Trillion Trees Act" bill was introduced.

### **Release of President's Budget Request for FY 2021**

The FY 2021 President's budget request, [A Budget for America's Future](#), was released on February 10. The high level numbers outlined within the request do not align with the [Bipartisan Budget Act of 2019](#) negotiated by Congress over the summer which raised discretionary spending limits or 'budget caps.' Overall, the budget includes \$590 billion in non-defense spending (compared to the \$626.5 billion budget cap agreement) and \$740.5 billion in defense spending (compared to the \$671.5 billion budget cap agreement). The President's budget calls for a decrease of \$2 billion (13.4% decrease) for the Interior Department and a decrease of \$1.9 billion (8.2% decrease) for USDA from FY 2020 enacted levels.

The [USDA Forest Service \(Forest Service\) FY 2021 Budget Justification](#) detailing individual program level funding was released the same day as the President's budget request. You can [view](#) the updated CWSF/WFLC budget table showing the proposed funding levels from the Administration as compared to previous years enacted level. Highlights are outlined below:

- Forest Service total = \$5.5 billion (\$155.58 million less than FY 2020 enacted)
- State and Private Forestry = \$217.44 million (\$129.55 million less than FY 2020 enacted)
  - Landscape Scale Restoration = \$14.004 million (\$4 thousand increase over FY 2020)
  - Forest Legacy Program and Urban and Community Forestry zeroed out
  - State Fire Assistance/National Fire Capacity = \$81.15 million (\$853 thousand less than FY 2020)
  - Volunteer Fire Assistance/Rural Fire Capacity = \$17 million (\$1 million less than FY 2020)
- Forest and Rangeland Research = \$249.33 million (\$55.67 million less than FY 2020 enacted)
  - Forest Inventory and Analysis = \$78.45 million (\$1.45 million increase over FY 2020)
- National Forest System = \$2.01 billion (\$47.55 million increase over FY 2020 enacted)
  - Collaborative Forest Landscape Restoration zeroed out (\$40 million less than FY 2020)

- Hazardous Fuels = \$510 million (\$64.70 increase over FY 2020)
- Wildland Fire Management = \$2.41 billion (\$58.82 million increase over FY 2020 enacted)
  - Preparedness = \$1.398 billion (\$58.82 million increase over FY 2020)
  - Suppression = \$1.011 billion (equal to FY 2020)
  - \$2.04 billion cap adjustment available if base suppression funding is exhausted (\$90 million increase over FY 2020)
  - Wildland Fire Management total with cap adjustment = \$4.45 billion (\$148.81 million total increase from FY 2020)

## Legislative Update

### **Climate Leadership and Environmental Action for our Nation’s (CLEAN) Future Act**

The [legislative text](#) of the draft CLEAN Future Act was [released by Democrats on the House Committee on Energy and Commerce](#). The CLEAN Future Act outlines a climate plan to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas pollution by 2050.

Sections of interest include:

- The definition of qualified renewable biomass in the Federal Clean Electricity Standard (starting on page 32 of the legislative text);
- National Academy of Sciences Report evaluation of the appropriateness of using biomass for clean energy (starting on page 48); and
- State Climate Plans (starting on page 523).

The legislative framework/background document can be found [here](#) and a section-by-section guide to the legislation is available [here](#).

### **The Trillion Trees Act**

On February 12, [Representative Bruce Westerman \(R-AR\)](#) introduced [H.R. 5859](#), legislation aimed at contributing to the U.N. initiative with a goal of planting one trillion trees globally by 2050. The bill incentivizes the use of wood products as carbon sequestration devices to support climate change mitigation efforts, as well as enhance forest markets. The bill has three parts:

- **Title I- Reforestation Activities:** “Plant more trees in urban areas and on marginal agriculture land domestically while offering technical support and assistance for other countries to maximize forest growth internationally and reverse deforestation.”
- **Title II- Improved Forest Management Activities:** “Grow more wood in existing forests and make them more resilient to insects, diseases and catastrophic wildfires.”
- **Title III- Market Incentives:** “Store more carbon by incentivizing innovative building practices with a sustainable building tax credit.”

The bill directs the Environmental Protection Agency to establish policies reflecting the carbon neutrality of sustainable biomass (Section 302 on page 55) and the Secretary of Agriculture to establish feasible targets for increased wood growth, both naturally regenerated and planted (Sec. 101 on page 5). A reforestation task force (Sec. 102 on page 6) would be created to advise the Secretary of Agriculture on recommendations for wood targets and policies and programs to stimulate timber markets and improve natural regeneration rate through active forest management.

