



## Legislative & Policy Update – March 2023

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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](#).

This month's policy update highlights the release of the President's budget proposal for fiscal year (FY) 2024 and the year one project award list for the Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) program.

### **FY 2024 President's Budget**

President Biden released the [FY 2024 budget request](#) at the beginning of March. It outlines the administration's proposed levels of federal spending for the FY beginning in October 2023. The USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) high-level budget highlights include the following differences between FY 2023 enacted levels:

- 3% decrease for State, Private, and Tribal Forestry (a decrease of \$10 million);
- 13.7% increase for the National Forest System (an increase of \$251.9 million);
- 6.5% increase to the Forest Service Operations (\$163.8 million);
- 13.6% increase for Research and Development (\$41.8 million); and
- 46.5% increase for Wildland Fire Management (\$2.025 billion).

A stated priority within the budget is investing in the wildland fire management workforce, including "firefighter pay reform, funding for vital health and well-being assistance, facilities maintenance funds prioritized primarily for firefighter housing needs." More information can be found in the [White House fact sheet](#), [USDA budget](#), the [Forest Service budget justification](#), and the [National Association of State Foresters press release](#).

### **Community Wildfire Defense Grant Program**

On March 20, the long anticipated first year [project list](#) for the CWDG program was [announced](#) by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. The CWDG program was created through the Bipartisan Infrastructure law, providing \$1 billion for five FYs for grants for at-risk communities to develop or revise Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) or carry out projects described in a CWPP.

For a deeper look at the western process, read our blog post "[\\$197 Million Invested in State, Private, and Tribal Lands Through Community Wildfire Defense Grants](#)". More information can also be found on the [CWSF CWDG webpage](#) or the [USDA Forest Service CWDG webpage](#).