



## Legislative & Policy Update – June 2025

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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](#). 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, which provides summaries on other key legislative and programmatic issues. If you have not yet subscribed, you can do so [here](#). For more information, please contact [Neil Simpson](#), CWSF/WFLC Director of Policy.

This month's policy update covers:

- Roadless Rule Rescinded
- Fiscal Year 2026 Appropriations
- President Trump's Wildfire Executive Order
- Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025 Signed into Law
- Seven Wildfire Bills Introduced

### Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins Rescinds the Roadless Rule

On June 23, 2025, during a Western Governors' Association Meeting, Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is rescinding the 2001 Roadless Rule. The [press release](#) states, "Of the 58.5 million acres of inventoried roadless areas covered under the 2001 Roadless Rule, 28 million acres are in areas at high or very high risk of wildfire. Rescinding this rule will allow this land to be managed at the local forest level, with more flexibility to take swift action to reduce wildfire risk and help protect surrounding communities and infrastructure."

### Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Appropriations

On Friday, May 30, the White House released a [1,200-page appendix](#) adding more detail to the President's skinny budget, which proposes cuts to nearly all parts of the federal government. The appendix adds some details regarding plans to consolidate federal fire programs into one federal fire agency, eliminating Forest and Rangeland Research, and State, Private, and Tribal Forestry (SPTF).

The appendix states:

- **U.S. Wildland Fire Service (WFS)** - Contingent upon enactment of authorizing legislation, the 2026 Budget consolidates all wildland fire management activities dispersed across the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI) and USDA into the DOI. The new service will be distinct in command and appropriations from existing wildland firefighting agencies and will streamline federal wildfire suppression response, risk mitigation efforts, and coordination with non-federal partners to combat the wildfire crisis.
- **State, Private, and Tribal Forestry (SPTF)** - The budget does not request new funding for these programs; instead, the agency will strategically utilize existing carryover balances to responsibly and effectively terminate these programs.

- **Forest and Rangeland Research (R&D)** - The budget does not request new funding for Forest and Rangeland Research; instead, the agency will strategically utilize existing carryover balances to responsibly and effectively terminate research programs and close research stations.
- **The Forest Inventory and Analysis program (FIA)** - Previously within the Forest and Rangeland Research account, and the Nation's foremost comprehensive census covering all 50 states and territories, is requested in the National Forest System (NFS) account for 2026 at a funding level of \$21.5 million. (Note - FIA was funded at 31.5 million in FY 24.)

Additionally, the DOI has released its [FY 2026 Interior Budget in Brief](#), and USDA has released its [USDA FY 2026 budget summary](#). These documents reflect the same changes, with the USDA Budget stating:

- This new DOI bureau will absorb the Forest Service Wildland Fire Management response program, including over 11,000 firefighters, 3,000 operational fire support personnel and leadership, and nearly 450 business support personnel.
- All NFS Hazardous fuels funding (\$175 million) will be requested by DOI in support of the new U.S. Wildland Fire Service to perform and or facilitate mechanical and prescribed fire operations on NFS lands.

Overall, the total FY 26 appropriations request for the WFS in the DOI Budget in Brief is \$3.70 billion. This appears flat when compared to FY 24 levels of \$1.11 billion in DOI and \$2.59 billion in Forest Service related fire program budget line items, but the documents lack sufficient detail to determine exactly how much from existing budget line items are included in the proposed WFS line items. Notably, the DOI Budget in Brief requests only \$2.8 million for Grants and Partnerships, while the SPTF State Fire Assistance and Volunteer Fire Assistance Programs are zeroed out, resulting in a \$95 million reduction in suppression and hazardous fuels support to state, tribal, and local governments.

The Administration's proposed budget is an early part of the appropriations process and kicks off a lengthy series of hearings and markups. To date, several hearings have been held in which appropriators have questioned the value of consolidating firefighting agencies and how federal agencies will deliver their work with such significant cuts.

- Watch the May 20, 2025, House Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the House Appropriations Committee [Budget Hearing with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum](#).
- Watch the May 21, 2025, Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee [Budget Hearing with Interior Secretary Doug Burgum](#).
- Watch the June 11, 2025, Senate Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee [Budget Hearing with Forest Service Chief Tom Schultz](#).

The House Appropriations Committee has postponed the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies markup. Follow the [Committee's webpage](#) for an updated schedule and other appropriations information.

### **President Trump Issues Wildfire Executive Order**

On June 12, 2025, President Trump issued an Executive Order (EO) titled "[Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response](#)." The EO provides deadlines for several tasks aimed at streamlining federal wildfire capabilities and encouraging local preparedness and response.

The EO requires that, within 90 days, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior shall:

- Consolidate their fire programs to the maximum degree possible.
- Expand and strengthen the use of partnerships, agreements, compacts, and mutual aid capabilities that empower federal, state, local, tribal, and community-driven land management that reduces wildfire risk and improves response.

- Develop and expand the use of other measures to incentivize responsible land management and wildfire prevention, mitigation, and response measures at the state and local levels.
- Consider promoting, assisting, and facilitating innovative uses of woody biomass and forest products.

The EO also requires that within 90 days:

- The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shall consider modifying or rescinding rules that impede the use of prescribed fire and work with the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to modify or rescind rules that impede the use of fire retardant.
- The federal government considers rulemaking to reduce the risk of wildfire ignition from the bulk-power system.
- The Attorney General reviews pending wildfire-related litigation involving electrical utility companies.

The EO requires historical satellite datasets that advance wildfire prevention and response to be declassified and made available to the public within 120 days.

The EO requires the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior, in consultation with the Secretary of Commerce and the heads of the agencies represented at the National Interagency Fire Center (NIFC), to do the following within 180 days:

- Develop a technology roadmap to increase wildfire capabilities at the state and local levels through artificial intelligence, data sharing, and other technological advancements.
- Promote a risk-informed approach to develop new policies that remove barriers to preventing and responding to wildfires, including through year-round response readiness, better forest health, and activities outlined in the [Timber Expansion Executive Order](#).
- Identify and consider eliminating or revising rules that impede wildfire prevention, detection, and response.
- Develop performance metrics for wildfire response, including metrics related to average response times, annual fuels treatments, safety, and cost effectiveness.

The EO requires the Secretary of Defense to prioritize the sale of excess aircraft and aircraft parts to support wildfire mitigation and response within 210 days.

In a [press release](#), the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) commented, “Fortifying the national wildland fire response system necessitates sustained federal, state, and local collaboration and investments to increase proactive wildfire mitigation efforts, adopt new technologies, and provide safe, effective fire suppression response. NASF stands ready to continue our longstanding partnership with the federal agencies represented at NIFC to implement the Executive Order to reduce wildfire risk and improve wildfire response nationwide.”

### **Aerial Firefighting Enhancement Act of 2025 Signed into Law**

[S. 160, the Aerial Enhancement Act of 2025](#), introduced by Senator Sheehy (R-MT) and cosponsored by four others, was signed into law on June 12, 2025. The law amends the [Wildfire Suppression Aircraft Transfer Act](#), which expired on September 30, 2000. It reauthorizes, until 2035, the sale by the Department of Defense of aircraft and parts to the private sector if they are used for the delivery of fire retardant on a wildfire incident. It also adds water delivery as an acceptable use of the aircraft and removes the prohibition that the aircraft may not leave the United States unless dispatched through NIFC and approved in advance and in writing by the Secretaries of Defense and Agriculture.

### **Strategic Grazing to Reduce Risk of Wildfire Act Introduced in the Senate**

[S.1981, the Strategic Grazing to Reduce Wildfire Risk Act](#), introduced by Senator Cortez Masto (D-NV) and cosponsored by Senator Curtis (R-UT), would require the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior to develop a strategy to utilize grazing for wildfire risk reduction. The act is generally aimed at targeted fuel reduction of cheatgrass and other invasive annual grasses.

The bill directs the Secretaries to consider many items, including using vacant grazing allotments, temporary permits, and targeted grazing to control invasive annual grasses and the use of targeted grazing in post-fire recovery efforts. It also directs the Secretaries to consult with states, local governments, tribes, utility authorities, and interested community members and organizations in the development of the strategy. The bill is similar to section 117 of the House and Senate versions of the Fix Our Forests Act. It has been referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources.

### **Wildfire Response and Preparedness (WRAP) Act Introduced in the House**

Representatives Gray (D-CA) and Kim (R-CA) introduced the Wildfire Response and Preparedness (WRAP) Act in the House of Representatives. The [press release](#) contains a link to the text of the bill and states the bill “would establish a 30-minute response time to fires on federal land” and “aid national fire suppression efforts by implementing a rapid response standard to quickly engage fire conditions as they emerge.” The bill is the House companion to [S. 902](#), introduced by Senators Sheehy (R-MT) and Kim (D-NJ).

### **National Prescribed Fire Act of 2025 Introduced in the Senate and House**

Senators Wyden (D-OR) and Budd (R-NC) introduced [S. 2015, the National Prescribed Fire Act of 2025](#), and Representatives Schrier (D-WA) and Valadao (R-CA) introduced companion legislation, [H.R. 3889](#), in the House. In general, the bill directs the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior to increase the use of prescribed fire by 10 percent each year over the next decade, and it acknowledges and supports cultural burning by “Indian Tribes and Indigenous practitioners.”

To accomplish this, the bill authorizes up to 15% of DOI and Forest Service hazardous fuels funding to be used for:

- Contracts, agreements, and grants to state, tribal government, local government, and other partners to perform environmental reviews and implement prescribed fires on federal land,
- Conducting prescribed fire on non-federal land,
- Providing prescribed fire and smoke management training to federal employees and cooperators,
- Providing technical or financial assistance to a state, tribal government, local government, prescribed fire council, prescribed burn association, or nonprofit organization to provide training for prescribed fire or smoke management.

S. 2015 has been referred to the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. H.R. 3889 has been referred to three House committees, Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Energy and Commerce.

### **Fire Weather Development Act Introduced in the House**

Representative Crank (R-CO) introduced the Fire Weather Development Act with co-sponsors Rivas (D-CA), Begich (R-AK-AL), and Hurd (R-CO). According to the [press release](#), the act would direct the Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to establish a program to improve fire weather and fire environment forecasting, detection, and delivery of products or services through collaboration with other federal and state agencies or departments, local emergency managers, and relevant entities

### **Bicameral Package of Wildfire Bills Introduced**

Senator Gallego (D-AZ) and Representative Neguse (D-CO) introduced a package of three bills aimed at improving wildfire prevention, mitigation, and management.

### **Cross Boundary Wildfire Solutions Act**

Senator Gallego (D-AZ) introduced [S. 2033](#), and Representative Neguse (D-CO) introduced [H.R. 3922](#). The two companion bills, titled the Cross-Boundary Wildfire Solutions Act, would direct the Government Accountability Office to conduct a study and provide Congress a report identifying federal programs, rules, and authorities that enable or inhibit cross-boundary wildfire mitigation work from being completed and changes that could increase capacity or funding for cross-boundary wildfire mitigation.

### **Wildfire Coordination Act**

Senator Gallego (D-AZ) introduced [S. 2038](#), and Representative Neguse (D-CO) introduced [H.R. 3923](#). The two companion bills, titled the Wildfire Coordination Act, would establish a “Wildfire Science and Technology Board” to coordinate federal wildfire research, establish private-federal partnerships, and ensure research is useful in practical applications. The board would comprise 18 federal members and not more than 18 non-federal members, including at least one state, one local, and one tribal government representative.

### **Wildfire Risk Evaluation Act**

Senator Gallego (D-AZ) introduced [S. 2039](#), and Representative Neguse (D-CO) introduced [H.R. 3924](#). The two companion bills, titled the Wildfire Risk Evaluation Act, would direct the Secretaries of Agriculture, Interior, and Homeland Security to conduct a review and report to Congress every four years for the next twenty years.

The review and report would include an analysis of:

- Changes to the built and natural environment.
- The intersection of wildland fire and public health.
- Recommendations regarding federal legislation and policies to address identified problems.
- Analysis of progress made toward implementing the National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy and “ON FIRE: The Report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission.”

View Senator [Gallego's press release](#), Representative [Neguse's press release](#), and a Congressional [one-pager](#).