



Legislative & Policy Update – March 2022

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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](#), Director of Policy.

Western governors' State of the State addresses and President Biden's State of the Union all highlighted the significance of investment in infrastructure, including efforts to increase wildfire resilience. Just prior to the deadline of the Continuing Resolution that had been funding the federal government, Congress passed the appropriations bills for fiscal year (FY) 2022.

State of the Union and States

President Biden provided his [State of the Union](#) speech to Congress this month where he spotlighted the importance of the bipartisan effort to pass the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the impact it will have across the country. Funding provided to increase wildfire risk reduction efforts by the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) was emphasized within the [fact sheet](#) released in advance of his address.

In addition to this national attention, State of the State addresses by governors across the West have referenced the growing wildfire crisis and efforts to combat this issue, which has now become a year-round threat. "We [have] learned that the words 'fire season' don't apply when the most destructive fire in Colorado history happens on December 30th," stated Colorado Governor Jared Polis in the opening of his address. Oregon Governor Kate Brown likewise underscored the increased intensity and devastating impacts of wildfire, while Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak pointed to federal wildfire investments as a way to make progress. A resource on the 2022 State of the State addresses from the Western Governors' Association is available [here](#).

FY2022 Appropriations

FY2022 appropriations bills passed in the Senate on March 10 as a \$1.5 trillion omnibus, the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2022 ([H.R.2471](#)). Due to the agreement reached on top level defense and nondefense program spending, the robust increases for nondefense forestry funding proposed in the earlier draft bills from both chambers did not materialize.

Forest Service State and Private Forestry increased \$48 million including salaries and expenses compared to FY2021, with an increase of \$41.58 million in programmatic increases. Approximately \$30 million of this increase to State and Private Forestry is due to Community Project Funding/Congressional Directed Spending, also known as earmarks. The National Forest System account saw an increase of \$79.68 million,

with a programmatic increase of \$29.68 million. Additional highlights from the FY2022 Forest Service appropriations include:

- Forest Stewardship Program: \$12 million, an increase of \$100 thousand compared to FY2021;
- State Fire Assistance (State Fire Capacity): \$75 million, an increase of \$1.57 million;
- Volunteer Fire Assistance (Volunteer Fire Capacity): \$20 million, an increase of \$1 million;
- Hazardous Fuels: \$187.4 million, an increase of \$7 million;
- Urban and Community Forestry: \$36 million, an increase of \$4.09 million;
- Landscape Scale Restoration: \$14 million, level funding with FY2021;
- Forest Health Cooperative Lands: \$32 million, an increase of \$1.25 million;
- Forest Inventory and Analysis: \$22.19 million, an increase of \$4.57 million; and
- Forest Legacy Program: \$88.88 million, a reduction of \$5.37 million.

Wildland Fire Management received \$5.48 billion between the Forest Service and DOI, an increase of \$211 million from last year. The Act provides a total of \$2.04 billion for Forest Service Wildland Fire Management, including \$172 million for preparedness and \$1.01 billion for suppression operations. When combined with the \$2.12 billion provided in the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund for use when other funds are exhausted, Forest Service suppression operations have \$3.13 billion total funds available.