

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 22, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Republican Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Barbara Mikulski  
Chairwoman  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, the Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Appropriations  
S-128, the Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader McConnell, Chairman Mikulski, and Ranking Member Shelby:

We write to urge you to bring to the floor emergency supplemental appropriations legislation for \$615 million to assist in fighting wildfires this year, as well as legislation that would fix our broken system of wildfire suppression funding going forward.

In the past several years, we have seen the cost of fighting wildfires far exceed the funding appropriated by Congress. In the last two years, the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior have been forced to take money from other important programs to cover the cost of fighting wildfires. Many of the programs that have lost money in the past two years are the very same programs that help fund fire prevention efforts, such as hazardous fuel removal programs. This is no way to responsibly fund wildfire management in this country.

This fire season is on track to surpass the fire suppression funding appropriated for FY14. The west is experiencing a harsh fire season with dry forest conditions and pervasive droughts. There are large active fires in many western states, and new fires starting daily. Both Oregon and Washington have declared states of emergency, acknowledging that the scope, breadth, and severity of the wildfires have overwhelmed local capabilities and pose a threat to life, safety, and property. We must act immediately to pass emergency supplemental appropriations to ensure we do not continue this vicious cycle of fire funding, and include legislation to permanently fix the fire funding problem, such as the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act of 2013.

We cannot afford to wait another year to fix this urgent problem. We urge you to bring emergency supplemental appropriations legislation, as well as a fire funding legislative fix to the floor so that we can deal with wildfire funding once and for all. We look forward to working with you to pass this legislation expeditiously.

Thank you for your consideration and expedited action.

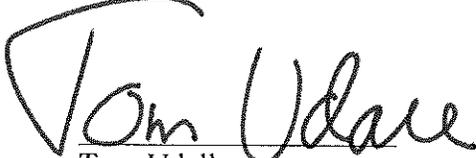
Sincerely,



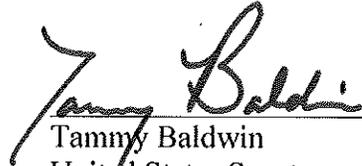
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



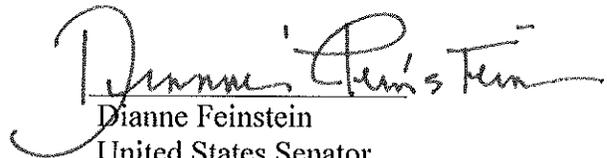
Tom Udall  
United States Senator



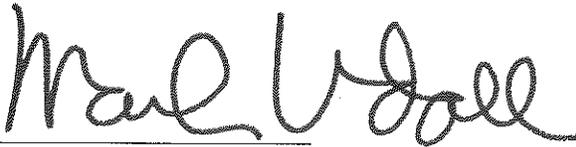
Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



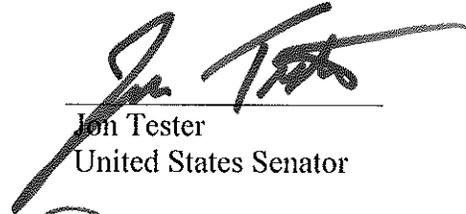
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Mark Udall  
United States Senator



John Tester  
United States Senator



John Walsh  
United States Senator



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



Barbara Boxer  
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator