

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 17, 2022

The Honorable Marty Walsh
Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Deb Haaland
Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretaries Walsh, Vilsack, and Haaland:

We write to strongly urge you to provide additional programming and support for Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs) to meet our wildland firefighter and wood products workforce development, recruitment, and retention challenges to better position this critical workforce for the future.

The Job Corps Civilian Conservation Centers (CCCs) serve as critical resources for forestry work – both through the hundreds of thousands of hours Job Corps CCC enrollees contribute to conservation and wildland firefighting and as a pipeline for the recruitment, training, and hiring of firefighters. We were pleased to learn that your Departments recently approved an expansion of the conservation and firefighting trades offered at several campuses. These additional forestry conservation and firefighting trades will allow the Job Corps CCCs to prepare more young Americans to be a part of this vital workforce.

All signs point to yet another dangerous wildfire season, given severe to exceptional drought conditions as well as fuel levels that the Forest Service labels as being at “crisis proportions.” Given that the Job Corps CCCs serve as one of the principal federal academies for developing the workforce needed to tackle this challenge, we are writing to inquire about your Departments’ efforts and plans to expand the reach and scale of these critical workforce development programs called for by the President and Congress.

- What are your Departments doing to specifically increase enrollment at Job Corps CCCs? Do your Departments fund and conduct marketing specifically focused on recruiting for Job Corps forestry conservation and firefighting trades? Will your Departments commit to expanding investments in such marketing to align with the Administration’s efforts on developing this workforce? What steps will your Departments be taking to expand the number of Job Corps CCCs, both on federal lands and not, offering wildfire and forestry curriculum to support the Administration’s efforts to develop this workforce?
- Work-based learning on federal lands is a core part of all Job Corps CCC enrollees’ learning experience, regardless of trade. What would be necessary to expand the amount

of paid work-based learning opportunities with all federal land management agencies available to Job Corps enrollees, whether enrollees are at Job Corps CCCs or other campuses? Are there additional authorities you need from Congress that could improve or enhance this pipeline?

- In 2012, the Department of Labor reduced the student capacity at all Job Corps campuses, including the Job Corps CCCs, because of a budget shortfall, and capacity has not grown significantly since. How much capability exists at Job Corps CCCs to host additional students? How much would it cost to fill all available spots at Job Corps CCCs? How could the current shared operational structure between USDA and DOL be improved to enhance curriculum, recruiting, and planning for Job Corps CCC?

Given the urgency of expanding our firefighting workforce, we appreciate your timely consideration and response to these questions.


Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



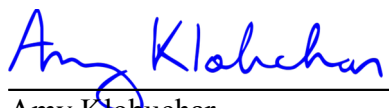
M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Michael D. Crapo
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



John Boozman
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



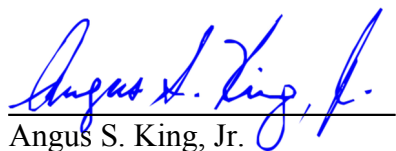
Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Angus S. King, Jr.", is positioned above a horizontal line. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "A".

Angus S. King, Jr.

United States Senator