

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

**S.** \_\_\_\_\_

To provide mandatory funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects on certain Federal land, and for other purposes.

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

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Mr. MERKLEY (for himself, Mr. PADILLA, Mr. WYDEN, and Mr. SCHIFF) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_

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**A BILL**

To provide mandatory funding for hazardous fuels reduction projects on certain Federal land, and for other purposes.

1       *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2       *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3       **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4       This Act may be cited as the “Wildfire Resilient  
5       Communities Act”.

6       **SEC. 2. FUNDING FOR HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION**  
7       **PROJECTS ON CERTAIN FEDERAL LAND.**

8       (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

9               (1) AGENCY HEAD.—The term “agency head”  
10       means—

1 (A) the Director of the National Park  
2 Service;

3 (B) the Chief of the Forest Service;

4 (C) the Director of the Bureau of Land  
5 Management;

6 (D) the Director of the United States Fish  
7 and Wildlife Service; and

8 (E) the Director of the Bureau of Indian  
9 Affairs.

10 (2) AT-RISK COMMUNITY; FIRE REGIME I; FIRE  
11 REGIME II; FIRE REGIME III.—The terms “at-risk  
12 community”, “fire regime I”, “fire regime II”, and  
13 “fire regime III” have the meanings given those  
14 terms in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Res-  
15 toration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511).

16 (3) COVERED LAND.—The term “covered land”  
17 means Federal land under the jurisdiction of the ap-  
18 plicable agency head.

19 (4) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION  
20 PROJECT.—The term “hazardous fuels reduction  
21 project” means the removal or modification of flam-  
22 mable vegetation or woody debris through prescribed  
23 fire, thinning, brush removal, mastication, pruning,  
24 slash treatment, or a combination of those methods,  
25 on the condition that the method is ecologically ap-

1       appropriate, cost-effective, and selected on a site-spe-  
2       cific basis.

3       (b) HAZARDOUS FUELS REDUCTION PROJECTS.—

4           (1) IN GENERAL.—The agency heads shall  
5       carry out hazardous fuels reduction projects on cov-  
6       ered land.

7           (2) PROJECT PRIORITIES.—In carrying out  
8       paragraph (1), the agency heads shall prioritize haz-  
9       ardous fuels reduction projects that are—

10           (A) conducted in areas that—

11                   (i) are within or adjacent to—

12                           (I) at-risk communities; or

13                           (II) high-value watersheds;

14                   (ii) have very high wildfire hazard po-  
15       tential; or

16                   (iii) are in fire regime I, fire regime  
17       II, or fire regime III; or

18           (B) designed to integrate and simulta-  
19       neously advance 2 or more of the goals estab-  
20       lished in the report of the Secretary of Agri-  
21       culture and the Secretary of the Interior enti-  
22       tled “The National Strategy: the Final Phase of  
23       the Development of the National Cohesive  
24       Wildland Fire Management Strategy” and  
25       dated April 2014 and the update entitled “Na-

1           tional Cohesive Wildland Fire Management  
2           Strategy Addendum Update” and dated Janu-  
3           ary 2023—

4                   (i) to create fire-adapted communities;

5                   (ii) to restore and maintain resilient  
6           landscapes; and

7                   (iii) to achieve safe, effective fire re-  
8           sponse.

9           (c) FUNDING.—

10           (1) IN GENERAL.—On the first October 1 fol-  
11           lowing the date of enactment of this Act, out of any  
12           funds in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated,  
13           the Secretary of the Treasury shall transfer to the  
14           agency heads, in accordance with an allocation for-  
15           mula established by the Secretary of the Treasury,  
16           in consultation with the agency heads,  
17           \$30,000,000,000, to remain available until ex-  
18           pended.

19           (2) RECEIPT AND ACCEPTANCE.—The agency  
20           heads shall be entitled to receive, shall accept, and  
21           shall use to carry out this section the funds trans-  
22           ferred under paragraph (1), without further appro-  
23           priation.

24           (3) ADMINISTRATIVE AND PLANNING COSTS.—

25           Not more than 10 percent of funding made available

1 under paragraph (1) may be used for administrative  
2 and planning costs.

3 **SEC. 3. ADDITIONAL AMOUNTS FOR COMMUNITY WILDFIRE**  
4 **DEFENSE GRANT PROGRAM.**

5 In addition to amounts made available to the Sec-  
6 retary of Agriculture under section 40803(c)(12) of the  
7 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C.  
8 6592(c)(12)), there is authorized to be appropriated to the  
9 Secretary of Agriculture to carry out section 40803(f) of  
10 the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (16 U.S.C.  
11 6592(f)) \$3,000,000,000 for the period of fiscal years  
12 2027 through 2031.

13 **SEC. 4. COLLABORATIVE FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORA-**  
14 **TION PROGRAM REAUTHORIZATION.**

15 Section 4003 of the Omnibus Public Land Manage-  
16 ment Act of 2009 (16 U.S.C. 7303) is amended—

17 (1) in subsection (b)(3)—

18 (A) in subparagraph (D), by striking “spe-  
19 cies;” and inserting “species or pathogens;”;

20 (B) in subparagraph (G), by striking  
21 “and” at the end;

22 (C) in subparagraph (H), by adding “and”  
23 after the semicolon at the end; and

24 (D) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(I) address standardized monitoring ques-  
2 tions and indicators;”;

3 (2) in subsection (c)(3)(A)—

4 (A) in clause (i), by striking “and” at the  
5 end;

6 (B) in clause (ii), by adding “and” at the  
7 end; and

8 (C) by adding at the end the following:

9 “(iii) include a Federal Government  
10 staffing plan for providing support to col-  
11 laborative processes established pursuant  
12 to subsection (b)(2);”;

13 (3) in subsection (d)—

14 (A) in paragraph (2)—

15 (i) in subparagraph (E), by striking  
16 “and” at the end;

17 (ii) in subparagraph (F), by striking  
18 the period at the end and inserting a semi-  
19 colon; and

20 (iii) by adding at the end the fol-  
21 lowing:

22 “(G) whether the proposal seeks to use in-  
23 novative implementation mechanisms, including  
24 conservation finance agreements, good neighbor  
25 agreements entered into under section 8206 of

1 the Agricultural Act of 2014 (16 U.S.C.  
2 2113a), and similar implementation mecha-  
3 nisms;

4 “(H) whether the proposal seeks to reduce  
5 the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire or increase  
6 ecological restoration activities—

7 “(i) within areas across land owner-  
8 ships, including State, Tribal, and private  
9 land; and

10 “(ii) within the wildland-urban inter-  
11 face; and

12 “(I) whether the proposal seeks to enhance  
13 watershed health and drinking water sources.”;  
14 and

15 (B) in paragraph (3)—

16 (i) in subparagraph (A), by striking  
17 “10” and inserting “20”; and

18 (ii) in subparagraph (B), by striking  
19 “2” and inserting “4”;

20 (4) in subsection (e)(3), by inserting “conflict  
21 resolution or collaborative governance,” before “and  
22 woody”; and

23 (5) in subsection (f)(6), by striking  
24 “\$80,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2019 through

1       2023” and inserting “\$100,000,000 for fiscal year  
2       2026 and each fiscal year thereafter”.

3   **SEC. 5. COUNTY STEWARDSHIP FUND.**

4       Section 604 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act  
5   of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6591c) is amended—

6           (1) by redesignating subsection (j) as sub-  
7       section (k); and

8           (2) by inserting after subsection (i) the fol-  
9       lowing:

10       “(j) COUNTY STEWARDSHIP FUND.—

11           “(1) IN GENERAL.—There is established in the  
12       Treasury of the United States a fund to be known  
13       as the ‘County Stewardship Fund’ (referred to in  
14       this section as the ‘Fund’), to be administered by  
15       the Secretary.

16           “(2) DEPOSITS.—Each fiscal year, with respect  
17       to each contract under subsection (b), there shall be  
18       deposited in the Fund an amount equal to the great-  
19       er of—

20           “(A) 25 percent of the appraised value of  
21       the forest products sold under the applicable  
22       contract, to be transferred from the general  
23       fund of the Treasury; and



1           “(B) 25 percent of the excess receipts from  
2           the applicable contract, as authorized under  
3           subsection (g)(2).

4           “(3) AVAILABILITY.—Amounts in the Fund  
5           shall—

6           “(A) be used only for purposes described  
7           in paragraph (4); and

8           “(B) remain available until expended.

9           “(4) PURPOSES.—

10           “(A) IN GENERAL.—Each fiscal year, the  
11           Chief or the Director, as applicable, shall dis-  
12           tribute from amounts in the Fund to each  
13           county in which a contract under subsection (b)  
14           was carried out on Federal land in the county  
15           during the preceding fiscal year a payment of  
16           an amount equal to 25 percent of the receipts  
17           generated from that contract.

18           “(B) USE OF FUNDS.—A county receiving  
19           a payment under subparagraph (A) may use  
20           the payment for any governmental purposes.”.