United States Department of Agriculture
Office of the Secretary
Washington, D.C. 20250

JUN 16 2015

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry
Committee on Agriculture
U.S. House of Representatives
1305 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Grisham:

This letter outlines the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service estimate of anticipated wildland fire suppression costs for fiscal year (FY) 2015, as required in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-88), as a part of the Title V-FLAME Act of 2009.

This estimate is pursuant to section 502(h)(3) of the Act, which requires the Secretary of Agriculture to submit an estimate of the anticipated wildfire suppression costs by the first week of May. The delay in the availability of certain data elements required for the development of the report presented challenges in preparing the report.

This forecast predicts, with 90 percent confidence, that fire suppression costs will be between $810 million and $1.620 billion in FY 2015, with a median forecast of $1.216 billion. These estimates are based on the best climate and weather data currently available as well as the most effective analytical tools and models used to estimate fire suppression costs. The median forecast for the FY 2015 fire season is more than $200 million above the appropriated suppression and FLAME funds available and illustrates the need for a new funding strategy for wildfire suppression as proposed in the President's FY 2016 budget request. If the median is met this fiscal year, the Forest Service will halt work and initiate transfers of funds from other budget line items. This is a destructive practice in many ways and I urge you to act quickly to pass fire suppression cap adjustment legislation so the largest and costliest fires do not erode the Forest Service's ability to support landscape and community resilience through forest restoration.

In compliance with section 435 of Division A of Public Law 111-88, this information will be posted to http://www.fs.fed.us/aboutus/budget/congressional-directives.shtml after 45 days.

A similar letter and the report are being sent to Senator Tom Udall, Senator Lisa Murkowski, Senator Ron Wyden, Senator John Barrasso, Senator Jon Tester, Congressman Tom McClintock, Congresswoman Niki Tsongas, Congressman Glenn Thompson, Congressman Ken Calvert, and Congresswoman Betty McCollum.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure

An Equal Opportunity Employer
Dear Senator Barrasso:

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining  
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources  
United States Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wyden:

This letter outlines the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service estimate of anticipated wildland fire suppression costs for fiscal year (FY) 2015, as required in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-88), as a part of the Title V- FLAME Act of 2009.

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable John Barrasso  
Chairman  
Committee on Indian Affairs  
United States Senate  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This letter outlines the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service estimate of anticipated wildland fire suppression costs for fiscal year (FY) 2015, as required in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-88), as part of the Title V- FLAME Act of 2009.

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Jon Tester  
Vice Chairman  
Committee on Indian Affairs  
United States Senate  
838 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tester:

This letter outlines the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service estimate of anticipated wildland fire suppression costs for fiscal year (FY) 2015, as required in the Department of the Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2010 (Public Law 111-88), as a part of the Title V-FLAME Act of 2009.

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Ken Calvert  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,  
and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Glenn Thompson  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Conservation and Forestry  
Committee on Agriculture  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1301 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Niki Tsongas  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Federal Lands  
Committee on Natural Resources  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1329 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman Tsongas:

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Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chair:

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Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
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Enclosure

An Equal Opportunity Employer
The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House and Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

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