MAY 24 2010

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Madam Chairman:

Enclosed is the Forest Service comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for firefighters in Region 5, as required on page 1150 of the House Appropriations Committee Print accompanying the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (H.R. 1105; Public Law 111-8).

A similar letter is being sent to Senator Lamar Alexander, Congressmen James P. Moran and Michael K. Simpson.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable James P. Moran  
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:

Enclosed is the Forest Service comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for firefighters in Region 5, as required on page 1150 of the House Appropriations Committee Print accompanying the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (H.R. 1105; Public Law 111-8).

A similar letter is being sent to Congressman Michael K. Simpson and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Lamar Alexander.

Sincerely,

Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Alexander:

Enclosed is the Forest Service comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for firefighters in Region 5, as required on page 1150 of the House Appropriations Committee Print accompanying the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (H.R. 1105; Public Law 111–8).

A similar letter is being sent to Congressman James P. Moran and Senators Dianne Feinstein and Lamar Alexander.

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Secretary

Enclosure
The Honorable Michael K. Simpson  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies  
Committee on Appropriations  
U.S. House of Representatives  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Simpson:

Enclosed is the Forest Service comprehensive recruitment and retention plan for firefighters in Region 5, as required on page 1150 of the House Appropriations Committee Print accompanying the Omnibus Appropriations Act, 2009 (H.R. 1105; Public Law 111–8).

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Enclosure
Firefighter Recruitment and Retention Plan

The firefighter retention plan was implemented in Fiscal Year (FY) 2009. Prior to the plan’s implementation, Region 5 had 363 vacancies in June 2008, representing an 8 percent vacancy rate against a planned staffing level of 4,469 positions. After implementation of the plan, the vacancy rate dropped to 4 percent or 178 vacancies as of January 2010 (see attachment 1).

The plan included 4 actions being taken by the Forest Service:

1. All seasonal firefighters were offered the option to convert to full-time firefighter positions. A total of 900 positions will convert to full time within FY 2010. The estimated cost of the conversion in FY 2010 is $17,076,000.

2. Effective March 1, 2009 a one year 10 percent Retention allowance for firefighters in grades GS-05 through GS-08 was implemented. At the end of 2009, 1,442 employees received the allowance at a one year cost of $6,874,000. The one year costs were split across two fiscal years, with the FY 2009 cost at $3,951,000 and FY 2010 cost at $2,923,000. The Forest Service decided to continue the retention incentive another year on January 25, 2010, to have a longer period of time to determine the effectiveness of the incentive. The estimated FY 2010 cost for the extension is $4,050,000.

3. The Forest Service will develop a plan of action by June 2010 on the requirements needed to determine if a special pay rate for California is needed. If the analysis shows the need, a request will be pursued through proper channels for submission to the Office of Personnel Management. The effectiveness of the 10 percent retention allowance must be determined prior to the pursuit of a special pay rate.

After review, the Forest Service did not pursue ordered standby as an alternative to portal-to-portal pay. The complexity, cost of administration, and the ineffectiveness of ordered standby as a one-for-one alternative to portal-to-portal all combined to support the decision to abandon the proposal.
Spending Plan

Of the $28 million the Congress has appropriated for the firefighter retention incentive plan, $3,951,000 was obligated in FY 2009, $24,049,00 is planned to be obligated in FY 2010. The table below provides detail:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spending Plan</th>
<th>FY 2009</th>
<th>FY 2010</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First Year 10% Retention Allowance</td>
<td>$3,951,000</td>
<td>$2,923,000</td>
<td>$6,874,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Second Year 10% Retention Allowance</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4,050,000</td>
<td>4,050,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>First Year Promotions</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17,076,000</td>
<td>17,076,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>$3,951,000</td>
<td>$24,049,000</td>
<td>$28,000,000</td>
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</table>

NOTE:

P.L. 110-329 the supplemental

$25,000,000 is for preparedness for retention initiatives in areas at high risk of catastrophic wildfire that face recurrent staffing shortages.

P.L. 11-8 the 2009 Omnibus - Conference Report

Preparedness - The bill provides the fiscal year 2008 funding level, plus $6,181,000 for fixed costs, plus $3,000,000 to continue the firefighter retention initiative funded through P.L. 110–329.
### Appendix 1: Planned, Current and Vacant Temporary and Permanent Positions

#### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Apprentices</th>
<th>Permanent 18+ PP</th>
<th>Temporary 1038 hrs</th>
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#### Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 2-15 (Permanent) 01-01-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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<th>Permanent 26+PP</th>
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#### Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 6-15 (Permanent) 01-01-20

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#### Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 2-16 (Apprentice, Permanent) 01-01-20

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
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#### Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 6-16 (Apprentice, Permanent, Temporary) 01-01-20

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### Notes
- Data for Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 2-15 (Permanent) 01-01-20 includes both permanent and temporary employees.
- Data for Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 6-15 (Permanent) 01-01-20 includes permanent employees only.
- Data for Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 2-16 (Apprentice, Permanent) 01-01-20 includes apprentices and permanent employees.
- Data for Fire, Fuels and Aviation Management Personnel Grades 6-16 (Apprentice, Permanent, Temporary) 01-01-20 includes apprentices, permanent, and temporary employees.
- The table displays the number of employees in each grade category for the fiscal year 2019-2020.