

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 1, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Leahy and Vice-Chairman Shelby:

We write to urge you to provide robust funding for the National Guard to support firefighting efforts in communities across the nation, particularly in the western states, affected by wildfires in the final Fiscal Year 2022 Defense Appropriations bill.

Year after year wildfires ravage local communities, businesses, homes and infrastructure in dry and western states. We ask that additional resources be allocated to the National Guard in order to train these members to do the critical work of protecting our communities. The appropriate training and equipment is essential to the wildfire season and with continued funding to the National Guard the states of Alaska, California, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, Oklahoma, Oregon, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wyoming can rest assured knowing the most appropriate measures have been taken in order to protect their communities and interests.

In 2021 alone, wildfires destroyed 6.8 million acres of land. As state and federal agencies struggle to keep up with the annual devastation due to wildfires, support from the National Guard members has been critical. In 2021, this funding trained over 30,000 National Guard members to fight wildfires and protect communities across the country. This critical firefighting capability requires continued support from Congress to be sustained.

As you finalize the FY22 Defense Appropriations bill, we urge you to include robust funding for wildfire training. It is critical to the National Guard's ability to protect communities from wildfires. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510



Roger Marshall
United States Senator



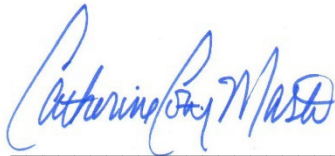
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator