United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 26, 2014

The Honorable Harry Reid
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to ask for your support in bringing S. 1875, the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, to a full vote before the U.S. Senate and include it in any upcoming appropriate legislative vehicle.

This bill would end the dysfunctional and destructive approach towards funding wildfire fighting. The current cycle of underfunding, and even raiding, programs used for critical forest restoration and wildfire prevention work results in having to spend even greater amounts fighting ever larger and more severe wildfires. This legislation's overarching policy goal is one of good budgeting. The reality is that the government has historically – and will in the future –fully fund fire suppression. But it is inefficient and ineffective to provide those resources on an ad hoc basis and as a result of taking those funds from other critical budget accounts. Budgeting in this manner does not allow for appropriate planning and ultimately does not provide for an effective allocation of funds to fight wildfires or take care of Federal forest lands.

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) provided us with an analysis that found that since S. 1875 is a budget process bill, no cost is assigned to this legislation by OMB or CBO for enforcement of either the discretionary spending limits or PAYGO. Furthermore, OMB's analysis concluded that under S. 1875 total funding for disasters is not expected to increase above currently estimated levels.

S. 1875 has bipartisan support in both the Senate and the House, support from the Administration, and the endorsement of over 200 organizations including the Western Governors' Association, the Nature Conservancy, the Federal Forest Resource Coalition, the National Rifle Association, and the National Association of State Foresters.

Thank you for your consideration and we look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ron Wyden

United States Senator

Mike Crapo

United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein

United States Senator

Tim Johnson

United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow

United States Senator

James Risch

United States Senator

Tom Udall

United States Senator

Mark Udall

United States Senator

Jeff Merkley
United States Senator

Michael Bennet
United States Senator

Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

John Walsh
United States Senator