



United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0504

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May 14, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

The Honorable Victoria Christiansen
Chief
U.S. Forest Service
201 14th St. SW
Washington, DC 20227

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christiansen:

I write today regarding the California Fire Assistance Agreement (CFAA) that the Forest Service has with the State of California. Given that California is facing another year of severe risk after two years of devastating wildfire losses, I ask that you delay implementation of any recommended actions from the recently completed internal audit. I also ask that you work with the Governor's office to address any necessary changes to the reimbursement process as part of the routine agreement renegotiation scheduled for the end of this year.

As you know, around 60 percent of forested land in California is owned by the federal government. Wildfires don't stop at jurisdictional boundaries, so a unified federal-state approach is the only way to properly protect lives and property. The State of California has dedicated enormous resources to building and maintaining one of the most professional and well-organized firefighting forces in the world. This force has been a key partner for decades in helping the federal government fight wildfires on federal land. Given increased wildfire risks in recent years, I do not believe that any action should be taken to jeopardize that partnership.

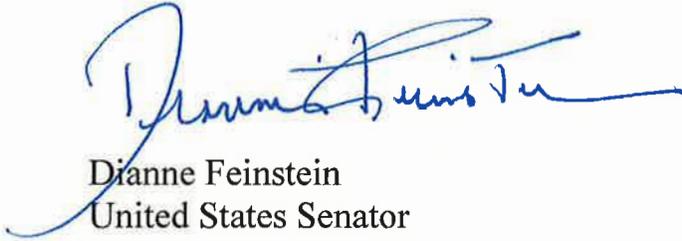
It is my understanding that the Forest Service undertook an internal audit to examine the agency's reimbursement practices under the CFAA and that this audit was completed on January 31, 2019. While this audit has not yet been provided to the State, the recommended actions were relayed to the California Office of Emergency Services (Cal OES), and the State was informed that the Forest Service

would be unilaterally moving forward to reduce reimbursement rates for the State and to require major changes to documentation requirements.

Given that California is facing another year of significant wildfire risk, I ask that you delay implementation of any recommend reimbursement changes from the audit and that you work with the State to address any issues as part of the renegotiation of the existing CFAA.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dianne Feinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

DF/jp