

Summary of Wildfire Emergency Act

Senator Dianne Feinstein, May 2021

Title I: Conservation finance agreements for landscape-scale forest restoration projects

- Authorizes \$250 million over 5 years for up to 20 Forest Service projects of 100,000 acres or greater to restore forests and reduce the risk of uncharacteristic wildfire:
 - There are substantial state, local, water district, and private funding sources willing to invest in landscape-scale forest restoration projects if the Forest Service is able to match the partners with its own long-term financial commitments to the projects.
 - Authorizes the Forest Service to enter into conservation finance agreements that can sufficiently leverage these non-Federal matching funds to implement 100,000 acre projects.
 - Requires collaborative development and ecological standards for landscape projects, including full consistency with all environmental laws.
 - Incentivizes project analysis procedures that are effective at the landscape level.

Title II: Energy flexibility and infrastructure hardening

- Establish a new \$100 million grant program to assist critical facilities like hospitals and police stations become more energy efficient and better adapted to function during power shutoffs. The new program would also provide funding for the expanded use of distributed energy systems, including microgrids.
- Expands the Energy Department's weatherization program to allow for the retrofit of homes to make them more resilient to wildfire through the use of fire-resistant building materials and other methods.
- Expedites permitting for the installation of wildfire detection equipment (such as sensors, cameras, and other relevant equipment) expand the use of satellite data to assist wildfire response, and allow FEMA hazard mitigation funding to be used for the installation of fire-resistant wires and infrastructure and for the undergrounding of wires.

Title III: Research, training, and capacity building

- Establishes one or more Prescribed Fire Centers to coordinate research and training of foresters and forest managers in the western United States in the latest methods and innovations in prescribed fire (controlled burns) practices to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic fires and improve the health of forests.
- Authorizes a new workforce development program to assist in developing a career-training pipeline for forestry and fire management workers, and establish a training center to teach foresters and fire managers in the latest methods and innovations in practices to reduce the likelihood of catastrophic fires and improve the health of forests.
- Authorizes \$50 million for capacity building for disadvantaged communities to plan and collaborate on forest restoration, tribal, and wildland-urban interface projects, and projects increasing equitable access to environmental education and volunteer opportunities.