

# United States Senate

June 17, 2022

The Honorable Kiran Ahuja  
Director  
Office of Personnel Management  
1900 E Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20415

Dear Director Ahuja,

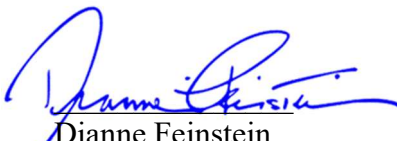
We write to urge you to swiftly implement the requirement for federal agencies to create a distinct “wildland firefighter” occupational series and to expedite the delivery of the \$600 million in supplemental pay for wildland firefighters as provided in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). The implementation of these provisions will increase federal wildland firefighter recruitment and retention and improve their morale.


As you know, your office set a target date of May 2022 for releasing the new occupational series guidelines, consistent with the 180-day timeline established in the IIJA. Now that the 2022 fire season has begun in earnest, with nearly 2 million acres burned nationwide, the implementation of the new occupational series is necessary and urgent. Any further delay will only further burden our land management agencies, which are faced with chronic staffing shortages.

The IIJA also included \$600 million to raise federal wildland firefighter salaries by up to \$20,000 per year and to convert 1,000 seasonal firefighter positions to permanent. We understand that the Forest Service and Department of the Interior have provided their pay supplement proposal to OPM. In testimony before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on June 9th, Forest Service Chief Randy Moore committed to providing higher pay for wildland firefighters by the end of June. We urge you to work with those agencies to meet that timeline.

We appreciate your attention to these issues as the West enters another potentially catastrophic fire season, and look forward to working together to support our nation’s wildland firefighters.

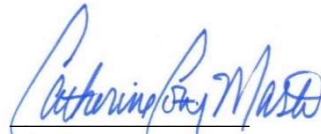
Sincerely,

  
Dianne Feinstein  
U.S. Senator

  
Alex Padilla  
U.S. Senator



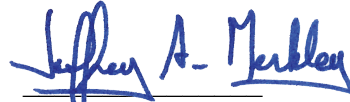
Angus King  
U.S. Senator



Catherine Cortez-Masto  
U.S. Senator



Jacky Rosen  
U.S. Senator



Jeff Merkley  
U.S. Senator

cc: The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack, Secretary of Agriculture  
The Honorable Debra A. Haaland, Secretary of the Interior  
The Honorable Shalanda D. Young, Director of the Office of Management and Budget