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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

State Foresters Praise Wildfire Suppression Funding Legislation
NASF Statement on the FLAME Act

Washington D.C., March 7, 2008 – The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act (FLAME Act) introduced yesterday by U.S. Reps. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), and Norm Dicks (D-WA) is an important step in solving the escalating cost of wildland fire protection and associated restrictions to urgently needed forest conservation efforts. The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) applauds the introduction of this bill and urges swift Congressional action on a sound solution that assures the health of America’s forests and the safety of our communities.

Wildfires continue to increase in number, size and intensity. In turn, fire suppression costs for the USDA Forest Service and the Department of Interior have skyrocketed, exceeding \$1 billion every year since 2000. The escalating cost of wildland fire suppression limits the capacity of other landscape-scale sustainable forest management programs on both public and private lands.

The FLAME Act would create a fund separate from the wildland fire suppression appropriated funding for the Forest Service and the Interior Department, which would be used only for the suppression of catastrophic, emergency wildland fires. One percent of wildfires destroy 95% of all burned acres and consume 85% of suppression costs. These extraordinary emergency fires should be treated the same way as other natural disasters, and should not come at the expense of all other Forest Service priorities and programs.

“NASF is encouraged by The FLAME Act and the effort by Representatives Rahall, Grijalva and Dicks to address the serious problem of wildfire suppression spending,” said Jay Farrell, NASF Executive Director. “We look forward to working with our partners in Congress to produce the most comprehensive fix possible that will best serve our citizens and our vital forest resource.”

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial agencies and the District of Columbia. Through public-private partnership, NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forestlands and their associated resources.

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