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**State Foresters Praise Wildfire Suppression Funding Legislation**

FLAME Act will help solve the drain fire costs have had on other critical forestry programs

**Washington DC, March 11, 2009** – Yesterday House and Senate leaders introduced bipartisan legislation designed to alleviate funding problems caused by emergency wildland fire costs. The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act (FLAME Act) (H.R. 1404) was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by U.S. Reps. Nick J. Rahall (D-WV), Raúl Grijalva (D-AZ), Norm Dicks (D-WA), Mike Simpson (R-ID), and Greg Walden (R-OR). Sens. Jeff Bingaman (D-NM), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Barbara Boxer (D-CA), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Tim Johnson (D-SD), Jon Tester (D-MT), Tom Udall (D-NM), and Ron Wyden (D-OR) co-sponsored the Senate bill. The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) supports the bill and applauds these Congressional leaders for working to solve one of the nation's most pressing forest conservation problems.

For years NASF has been a leading advocate for a comprehensive solution to the escalating cost of wildland fire protection and the associated negative impacts on forest conservation efforts. In a collaborative effort with other conservation, wildlife and forest products groups, NASF helped establish a Fire Suppression Funding Solutions Coalition that now consists of nearly 100 diverse organizations. The coalition has worked to educate Congress on the importance of addressing the concerns of wildland fire fighting, promoting prevention as well as suppression, and meeting the needs of communities.

The FLAME Act addresses the escalating costs of wildfire by creating a government fund for devastating emergency wildland fires that is separate from normal wildland fire suppression funds appropriated for the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior. The largest, most devastating wildfires are only one percent of all wildfires, yet they consume 95% of all acres and 85% of suppression costs. Creating a separate fund allows these extraordinary, emergency fires to be treated the same way as other natural disasters.

"The FLAME Act is an important solution because the cost of emergency wildfires prevents critical forest conservation work from being done across the nation on all lands – public and private," said Leah W. MacSwords, NASF President and State Forester of Kentucky.

President Obama's Fiscal Year 2010 budget outline included increased funding for fire suppression activities as well as \$282 million in a contingency account for emergency expenditures. The FLAME Act would provide the framework for that contingency funding and ensure that this type of partitioned account continues in the future.

"NASF is encouraged by Congressional action on this issue and urges swift passage of the FLAME Act. The diversity and commitment of the Fire Suppression Coalition proves that solving this issue benefits everyone," said Jay Farrell, NASF Executive Director.

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

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