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State Foresters Praise Interior Bill that Sets up FLAME Fund

Senate action is another step toward solving wildfire suppression drain on forestry programs

Washington DC, September 28, 2009 – Senate leaders unanimously approved the creation of a separate source of funding for federal agencies to suppress large-scale wildfires via an amendment to the Interior Appropriations bill (passed September 24). The Federal Land Assistance Management and Enhancement Fund (“FLAME” fund) is designed to alleviate funding problems caused by emergency wildland fire costs and is supported by the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and more than 100 other industry, environmental, outdoor recreation, and forestry organizations.

“NASF applauds the overwhelming support the FLAME fund has received in the House and the unanimous support demonstrated in the Senate,” said Steven W. Koehn, NASF President and State Forester of Maryland. “As the Interior bill moves through the legislative process, we strongly urge House and Senate conferees to uphold the intent of the FLAME amendment to ensure its ability to solve one of the nation’s most pressing forest conservation problems.”

State Foresters have been leading advocates for a comprehensive solution to the escalating cost of wildland fire protection and the associated negative impacts on forest conservation efforts. In 2009, NASF helped establish a Fire Suppression Funding Solutions Coalition that now consists of more than 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 amendment to the Senate Interior bill is similar to legislation passed by the House in March, and also complements an approach in President Obama’s Fiscal Year 2010 budget outline that set up a contingency account for emergency fire suppression expenditures.

The National Association of State Foresters is comprised of the directors of state and territorial forestry agencies and the District of Columbia. NASF seeks to advance sustainable forestry, conservation, and protection of forest lands and their associated resources. <http://www.stateforesters.org>

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