

November 18, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Jeffries:

We write to commend efforts in the House and Senate to tackle the growing wildfire risk facing the nation, and to urge your leadership to pass bipartisan wildfire prevention and resilience bills before the end of the year. Our associations represent a broad range of partners and actors advocating for legislative solutions to increase the nation's resilience to catastrophic wildfires, improve land use planning and land management, and better protect communities in wildfire prone regions.

In 2021, Congress took bipartisan action to establish the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, charged with making policy recommendations to Congress on ways to better prevent, manage, and recover from wildfires. Its representatives included federal agencies; state, local, and Tribal governments; wildland firefighters; state fire marshals; non-governmental organizations; public utilities; academia; and the private sector.

This diverse, 50-member Commission delivered its final report with policy recommendations to Congress last September and provided several essential findings that describe what is needed to break the cycle of severe wildfire risk, damage, and loss. Amongst these, the Commission found that we must shift our overall approach to wildfires from reactive to *proactive*; there is broad agreement that investing in proactive mitigation, planning, preparedness, and recovery is both effective and essential to prevent the growing severity of wildfires. Approaches should be undertaken collaboratively with state, local, and Tribal governments and communities. Additionally, any actions taken to reduce risk must encompass both the natural and built environment; much of community wildfire risk and the potential for future losses due to wildfire is related to the potential for embers and radiant heat to spread between structures.

We've collaborated with champions to support legislation based on or aligned with the Commission's findings and recommendations. Both the House and Senate have acted on related legislation across various committees, and we urge your leadership to direct relevant committee leaders to pre-conference such bipartisan proposals that could clear both chambers during the lame duck session.

There is bicameral, bipartisan momentum to pass legislation that can reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires and safeguard lives, protect properties, and prevent long-term impacts to the environment. We urge you not to miss this opportunity to act, and stand ready to assist you in this effort.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Wildfire Resilience
American Forests
American Property Casualty Insurance Association
Board of Supervisors, Coconino County, Arizona
BuildStrong America
Climate & Wildfire Institute
Conservation Northwest
Conservation X Labs
Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians
Edison Electric Institute
Environmental Defense Fund
Federation of American Scientists
FireGen Collaborative
Flagstaff Fire Department
Forest Stewards Guild
Grassroots Wildland Firefighters
Headwaters Economics
Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America
International Association of Fire Chiefs
Megafire Action
Mt. Adams Resource Stewards
National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies
National Association of State Foresters
National Wildfire Suppression Association
Outdoor Alliance
Reinsurance Association of America
Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition
Sustainable Northwest
Tall Timbers
Taxpayers for Common Sense
The Nature Conservancy
The Pew Charitable Trusts
The Stewardship Project
The Watershed Research and Training Center
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership
United Aerial Firefighters Association
Washington Prescribed Fire Council
Washington Resource Conservation and Development Council
Western Fire Chiefs Association
Wildfire Industry Collective