

118TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. R. 9702

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Wildfire Science and Technology Advisory Board.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 19, 2024

Mr. NEGUSE (for himself and Mr. HARDER of California) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources, and in addition to the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology, for a period to be subsequently determined by the Speaker, in each case for consideration of such provisions as fall within the jurisdiction of the committee concerned

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Wildfire Science and Technology Advisory Board.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wildfire Coordination
5 Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. WILDFIRE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY**
2 **BOARD.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior
4 shall establish a permanent advisory committee to be
5 known as the Wildfire Science and Technology Advisory
6 Board (in this section referred to as the “Board”).

7 (b) DUTIES.—The Board shall—

8 (1) coordinate the operationalization within the
9 Federal Government of wildfire research, including
10 by—

11 (A) identifying avenues for translating
12 wildfire research into practical applications;

13 (B) establishing criteria and frameworks to
14 prioritize wildfire research projects for
15 operationalization;

16 (C) facilitating the transition of prioritized
17 wildfire research into operational projects;

18 (D) connecting and supporting entities in
19 wildfire research and operations;

20 (E) providing feedback to refine and en-
21 hance wildfire research outputs for practical ap-
22 plication; and

23 (F) partnering, as the Board determines
24 appropriate, with private sector and federally-
25 funded research centers to further the work of
26 the Board;

(2) encourage wildfire researchers and Federal agencies undertaking wildfire operations to include—

(A) relevant disciplines, such as public health, meteorological science, and predictive modeling; and

(B) consideration of built and natural fire-prone environments; and

(3) disseminate information, including by—

(A) establishing mechanisms, such as newsletters and publications, online portals, webinars, and workshops, to disseminate wildfire research findings, operational best practices, and resources to relevant stakeholders and practitioners; and

(B) promoting activities of the Board to ensure visibility and accessibility to stakeholders.

(c) MEMBERSHIP.—

(1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Board shall be composed of the following members:

(A) The Secretary of the Interior (or the designee thereof).

(B) The Secretary of Agriculture (or the designee thereof).

1 (C) The Secretary of Commerce (or the
2 designee thereof).

3 (D) The Chief of the Forest Service (or
4 the designee thereof).

5 (E) The Director of the Bureau of Indian
6 Affairs (or the designee thereof).

7 (F) The Director of the Bureau of Land
8 Management (or the designee thereof).

9 (G) The Administrator of the Federal
10 Emergency Management Agency (or the des-
11 ignee thereof, except that such designee may
12 not be the member of the Board serving pursu-
13 ant to subparagraph (H)).

14 (H) The United States Fire Administrator
15 (or the designee thereof).

16 (I) The Director of the United States Fish
17 and Wildlife Service (or the designee thereof).

18 (J) The Administrator of the National
19 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (or
20 the designee thereof).

21 (K) The Director of the National Park
22 Service (or the designee thereof).

23 (L) The Director of the National Institute
24 of Standards and Technology (or the designee
25 thereof).

1 (M) The Director of the U.S. Geological
2 Survey (or the designee thereof).

3 (N) The Director of the Office of Science
4 and Technology Policy (or the designee there-
5 of).

6 (O) The Director of the National Science
7 Foundation (or designee thereof).

8 (P) The Administrator of the National
9 Aeronautics and Space Administration (or des-
10 ignee thereof).

11 (Q) The Director of the Centers for Dis-
12 ease Control and Prevention (or designee there-
13 of).

14 (R) The Administrator of the Environ-
15 mental Protection Agency (or designee thereof).

16 (S) Not more than 18 members, to be ap-
17 pointed by the Secretary of the Interior, as fol-
18 lows:

19 (i) At least 2 representatives of State,
20 local, or Tribal governments.

21 (ii) Representatives of relevant pri-
22 vate-sector entities, such as codes and
23 standards-setting organizations, prescribed
24 fire associations, and entities with exper-

tise in wildfire science and wildfire risk identification, transfer, and mitigation.

(iii) Wildfire, forest health, or ecological restoration researchers.

(iv) Public health experts.

(v) Meteorological scientists.

(vi) Predictive modeling experts.

(vii) Such other members as the Secretary of the Interior deems appropriate.

(2) TERMS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each member of the Board serving pursuant to subparagraph (M) or (N) of paragraph (1) shall be appointed for a term of 2 years.

(B) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Board shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(3) PAY AND EXPENSES.—

(A) PROHIBITION ON COMPENSATION.—A member of the Board shall serve without compensation.

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Board shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with applicable provisions under sub-

1 chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
2 Code.

3 (4) CHAIRPERSON.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
5 subparagraph (B), the Chairperson shall rotate
6 annually among the members of the Board
7 serving pursuant to subparagraphs (A), (B),
8 and (C) of paragraph (1), beginning with the
9 member serving pursuant to paragraph (1)(A),
10 followed by the member serving pursuant to
11 paragraph (1)(B).

12 (B) EXCEPTION.—For any term, the mem-
13 bers of the Board may designate a member of
14 the Board to serve as the Chairperson of the
15 Board in lieu of the official (or the designee
16 thereof) who would otherwise serve as the
17 Chairperson pursuant to subparagraph (A).

18 (5) STAFF; TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT
19 SERVICES.—

20 (A) STAFF.—The Board may appoint per-
21 sonnel as it considers appropriate.

22 (B) PAY.—The Chairperson of the Board
23 may fix the compensation of the personnel ap-
24 pointed under subparagraph (A) without regard
25 to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter

1 III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code,
2 relating to classification of positions and Gen-
3 eral Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of
4 pay for such personnel may not exceed the an-
5 nual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of
6 the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of
7 such title.

8 (C) DETAIL OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—

9 The head of any Federal department or agency
10 may detail any of the personnel of that depart-
11 ment or agency to the Board. A detail under
12 the preceding sentence shall be without reim-
13 bursement and without interruption or loss of
14 civil service status or privilege.

15 (D) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND

16 INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of
17 the Board may procure temporary and intermit-
18 tent services under section 3109(b) of title 5,
19 United States Code, at rates for individuals
20 that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the
21 annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V
22 of the Executive Schedule under section 5316
23 of that title.

24 (d) REPORT.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than the date that
2 is 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act,
3 the Board shall submit a report to the relevant con-
4 gressional committees, which shall—

5 (A) detail the activities of the Board;

6 (B) discuss progress on transitioning wild-
7 fire research into operations within the Federal
8 government;

9 (C) discuss barriers to successfully
10 transitioning wildfire research into operations
11 within the Federal government; and

12 (D) provide recommendations on future
13 wildfire research priorities and operational
14 needs.

15 (2) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
16 TEES.—In this subsection, the term “relevant con-
17 gressional committees” means—

18 (A) the Committees on Agriculture; Nat-
19 ural Resources; Science, Space, and Tech-
20 nology; and Transportation and Infrastructure
21 of the House of Representatives; and

22 (B) the Committees on Agriculture, Nutri-
23 tion, and Forestry; Commerce, Science, and
24 Transportation; Energy and Natural Resources;
25 Environment and Public Works; and Homeland

1 Security and Governmental Affairs of the Sen-
2 ate.

3 (e) TERMINATION.—Section 1013(a)(2) of title 5,
4 United States Code, shall not apply to the Board.

5 (f) FUNDING.—

6 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

7 There is authorized to be appropriated \$10,000,000
8 to carry out this section, to remain available until
9 expended.

10 (2) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—In addition to the
11 amounts made available pursuant to paragraph (1),
12 the Federal members of the Board may, for pur-
13 poses of carrying out this section, use amounts
14 whose purpose is not otherwise specified by the ap-
15 propriations laws available to the employing agencies
16 of such members.

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