

September 12, 2025

Funding for Wildfire Management: FY2025 Appropriations for Forest Service and Department of the Interior

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service (FS) and the Department of the Interior (DOI) are responsible for wildfire management and response across federal lands within their respective jurisdictions. Both FS and DOI generally receive discretionary appropriations for wildfire management and response activities through annual Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations laws. Wildfire management and response funding for DOI is provided to the department-level Office of Wildland Fire.

Debates regarding funding for wildfire management have persisted for decades. These debates frequently center on the adequacy of overall funding for wildfire management and response and, within that funding, the distribution between wildfire suppression and preparedness, mitigation, and recovery. Other debates center on the appropriate levels of funding for wildfire mitigation and preparedness on nonfederal land and whether existing levels and purposes for such funding adequately address cross-boundary wildfire mitigation and preparedness issues. Other debates have concerned the FS's and DOI's wildfire management funding compared to other agency activities and priorities.

FY2025 Budget Process

The Biden Administration requested \$6.7 billion in total FY2025 discretionary appropriations for FS and DOI wildfire purposes (see **Table 1**). This amount would have been an increase of \$325.4 million (5%) from FY2024 regularly enacted annual appropriations.

FY2025 Enacted Appropriations

For FY2025, Congress enacted funding for wildland fire management at FS and DOI as part of a full-year continuing resolution (CR), the Full-Year Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025 (P.L. 119-4). Regular FY2025 appropriations were not enacted by the start of the FY, but CRs provided regular funding at the FY2024 levels until enactment of full-year appropriations on March 13, 2025.

FS and DOI received a combined total of \$7.3 billion in FY2025 appropriations for wildfire purposes. This total includes \$6.3 billion in FY2025 regular discretionary appropriations to the agencies' wildland fire management (WFM) accounts (\$3.5 billion) and for the *wildfire adjustment* (\$2.8 billion, see **Table 1** and "Wildfire Accounts and Activities"; figures do not sum to total due to rounding). This combined total consists of \$4.8 billion for FS and \$1.5 billion for DOI. The remainder includes \$272.5 million in annual discretionary appropriations to other FS accounts for wildfire-related purposes, such as appropriations to the National Forest System account for hazardous fuels and to the State, Private, and Tribal Forestry account for wildfire-related assistance programs. It

also includes \$634.0 million in emergency supplemental appropriations provided to the FS and DOI through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA; P.L. 117-58, Division J). IIJA supplemental funding is provided for purposes including wildland fire management, assistance programs, hazardous fuels reduction, and others.

Wildfire Accounts and Activities

FS and DOI each have a WFM account. Within their respective WFM accounts, both agencies receive funding for wildland fire *preparedness*, or wildfire prevention, detection, equipment, and training, and *suppression*, or active wildfire response. DOI also receives funding through its WFM account for hazardous fuel reduction and other wildfire activities (e.g., site rehabilitation, assistance programs, research, facilities maintenance). In addition, FS receives appropriations for hazardous fuel reduction, assistance to nonfederal jurisdictions for wildfire management capacity, and other wildfire-related purposes. Most of this funding has been provided through other appropriations accounts (for example, the National Forest System account). Unlike DOI, FS has a separate budget line item in its WFM account for salaries and expenses.

Since FY2020, FS and DOI have received additional funding for suppression through the *wildfire adjustment* (2 U.S.C. §901(b)(2)(F)), also known as the *wildfire funding fix*, a budgetary mechanism that allows for an upward adjustment of the discretionary spending allocations to accommodate an amount of additional funding for suppression specified by statute for that fiscal year. The wildfire adjustment is available annually through FY2027, and the maximum amount available under the adjustment increases annually. A precondition for using the adjustment is that Congress must appropriate a baseline amount of funding for suppression purposes during that fiscal year. The baseline is equal to the 10-year suppression obligation average as reported in FY2015 (\$1.011 billion for FS; \$383.7 million for DOI). Since FY2020, Congress has appropriated the baseline suppression funds to the agencies' respective WFM accounts and appropriated the funds provided through the wildfire adjustment to a separate account for each agency; both of these accounts are named the Wildfire Suppression Operations Reserve Fund.

Preparedness

Preparedness includes the range of tasks necessary to ensure readiness for wildfire response. Prior to FY2021, both FS and DOI used preparedness funds to maintain and train baseline personnel; manage infrastructure, equipment, and resources (e.g., aviation assets, engines, communication equipment); develop, maintain, and advance technological tools to enhance decisionmaking capacity; and prepare and

execute fire management plans, cooperative agreements, and interagency coordination.

Table I. FS and DOI FY2024 and FY2025 Discretionary Wildfire Appropriations (\$ in millions)

	FY2024			FY2025			
	Regular	Supp.	Total	Request	Enacted		
					Regular	Supp.	Total
FS, Total	\$4,888.1	\$407.4	\$5,295.5	\$5,037.4	\$5,088.6	\$407.4	\$5,496.0
WFM, Total	2,312.7	36.0	2,348.7	2,550.4	2,426.1	36.0	2,462.1
<i>Salaries and Expenses</i>	1,109.6	—	1,109.6	1,334.9	1,223.1	—	1,223.1
<i>Preparedness</i>	192.0	—	192.0	204.5	192.0	—	192.0
<i>Suppression</i>	1,011.0	—	1,011.0	1,011.0	1,011.0	—	1,011.0
<i>Other</i>	—	36.0	36.0	—	—	36.0	36.0
Wildfire Adjustment	2,300.0	—	2,300.0	2,390.0	2,390.0	—	2,390.0
NFS Hazardous Fuels	175.5	102.8	278.3	207.0	175.5	102.8	278.3
Other	100.0	268.6	368.6	97.0	97.0	268.6	365.6
DOI, Total	\$1,463.5	\$262.6	\$1,726.1	\$1,639.5	\$1,507.2	\$262.6	\$1,769.7
WFM, Total	1,113.5	262.6	1,376.1	1,279.5	1,147.2	262.6	\$1,409.7
<i>Suppression</i>	383.7	—	383.7	568.8	383.7	—	383.7
<i>Preparedness</i>	492.4	42.3	534.7	383.7	526.1	42.3	568.4
<i>Fuels Management</i>	214.5	156.4	370.8	287.6	214.5	156.4	370.9
<i>Other/Unallocated</i>	23.0	64.0	87.0	39.5	23.0	64.0	87.0
Wildfire Adjustment	350.0	—	350.0	360.0	360.0	—	360.0
Total, WFM and Wildfire Adjustment	\$6,076.1	\$298.6	\$6,374.7	\$6,580.0	\$6,323.3	\$298.6	\$6,619.0
Total, FS and DOI	\$6,351.6	\$670.0	\$7,021.6	\$6,677.0	\$6,595.8	\$670.0	\$7,265.7

Source: CRS, with information from the House and Senate Committees on Appropriations (including S.Rept. 119-46 accompanying S. 2431 in the 119th Congress), FS and DOI FY2025 work plans, and other budget documents.

Notes: FY2025 Total Enacted reflects regular and supplemental appropriations provided in P.L. 119-4 and P.L. 117-58. FY2024 Regular Enacted reflects appropriations provided in P.L. 118-42, P.L. 117-58, and P.L. 117-328. DOI = Department of the Interior; FS = Forest Service; NFS = National Forest System; Supp. = Supplemental; WFM = Wildland Fire Management.

Starting in FY2021, many of these activities for FS are funded by the WFM salaries and expenses budget line item.

Suppression

Suppression is the work associated with extinguishing or confining a fire. Suppression appropriations are used primarily for wildfire response, including funding aviation asset operations, conducting other support functions in direct support of wildfire incidents, and funding postfire emergency stabilization activities. Baseline suppression funding is provided to FS's and DOI's respective WFM accounts, and funds provided pursuant to the wildfire adjustment are transferred to the WFM account as needed.

Hazardous Fuel Reduction

Hazardous fuel reduction is manipulating or removing hazardous fuels (e.g., vegetation) to reduce potential wildfire risk. Federal fuel reduction funding may be used for projects (or *treatments*) on federal lands, to provide assistance for projects on nonfederal lands, or to otherwise accelerate and incentivize fuel removal from federal lands.

Fuel reduction activities are funded within DOI's Fuels Management activity (WFM account) and FS's Hazardous Fuels activity (National Forest System account). FS and DOI also receive funding through other accounts and programs that may be used for fuel reduction; thus, funding provided to each agency's respective fuels program does not reflect the total funding available for these activities.

Other Wildfire Activities

FS and DOI receive appropriations for several other wildfire-related activities. For DOI, funding is provided within the WFM account for postfire rehabilitation, wildfire science and research, and facilities maintenance. For FS, funding for other wildfire activities is provided to other accounts for wildfire assistance programs, wildfire science and research, burned area recovery, and postfire restoration activities. Some of these activities do not receive line-item appropriations and are funded through allocations and other indirect sources.

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