

118TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 1764

To improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MAY 31 (legislative day, MAY 30), 2023

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, and for other purposes.

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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Western Wildfire Support Act of 2023”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

### TITLE I—PREPARATION

Sec. 101. Firefighting accounts.

Sec. 102. Reimbursement for wildfires caused by military training.

Sec. 103. Strategic wildland fire management planning.

Sec. 104. Accounts to assist communities in planning and preparing for wildfires.

Sec. 105. Community support during disaster response.

#### TITLE II—WILDFIRE DETECTION AND SUPPRESSION SUPPORT

Sec. 201. Wildfire detection equipment.

Sec. 202. Grant program for slip-on tank units.

Sec. 203. Assistance to States for operation of air tankers.

Sec. 204. Research and development of unmanned aircraft system fire applications.

Sec. 205. Study on effects of drone incursions on wildfire suppression.

Sec. 206. Study on wildfire detection equipment and integration of artificial intelligence technologies.

#### TITLE III—POST-FIRE RECOVERY SUPPORT

Sec. 301. Funding for online guides for post-fire assistance.

Sec. 302. Long-Term Burned Area Recovery account.

Sec. 303. Prize for wildfire-related invasive species reduction.

### 1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term  
4 “congressional committees” means—

5 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural  
6 Resources and the Committee on Appropria-  
7 tions of the Senate; and

8 (B) the Committee on Natural Resources  
9 and the Committee on Appropriations of the  
10 House of Representatives.

11 (2) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land”  
12 means—

13 (A) public lands (as defined in section 103  
14 of the Federal Land Policy and Management  
15 Act of 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1702));

16 (B) units of the National Park System;

1 (C) units of the National Wildlife Refuge  
2 System;

3 (D) land held in trust by the United States  
4 for the benefit of Indian Tribes or members of  
5 an Indian Tribe; and

6 (E) land in the National Forest System.

7 (3) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—

8 (A) IN GENERAL.—The term “National  
9 Forest System” has the meaning given the term  
10 in section 11(a) of the Forest and Rangeland  
11 Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 (16  
12 U.S.C. 1609(a)).

13 (B) EXCLUSION.—The term “National  
14 Forest System” does not include—

15 (i) the national grasslands and land  
16 utilization projects administered under title  
17 III of the Bankhead-Jones Farm Tenant  
18 Act (7 U.S.C. 1010 et seq.); or

19 (ii) National Forest System land east  
20 of the 100th meridian.

21 (4) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”  
22 means—

23 (A) the Secretary of the Interior; and

24 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture.

1           (5) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-  
2       retary concerned” means—

3           (A) the Secretary of the Interior, in the  
4       case of Federal land under the jurisdiction of  
5       the Secretary of the Interior; and

6           (B) the Secretary of Agriculture, in the  
7       case of Federal land under the jurisdiction of  
8       the Secretary of Agriculture.

## 9           **TITLE I—PREPARATION**

### 10       **SEC. 101. FIREFIGHTING ACCOUNTS.**

11       (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNTS.—There are es-  
12       tablished in the Treasury of the United States the fol-  
13       lowing accounts:

14           (1) The Firefighting Operations account for the  
15       Department of Agriculture.

16           (2) The Firefighting Operations account for the  
17       Department of the Interior.

18       (b) BUDGET ACTIVITIES WITHIN ACCOUNTS.—The  
19       following activities shall be specified for funding within  
20       each Firefighting Operations account established by sub-  
21       section (a):

22           (1) Ground-based firefighting operations.

23           (2) Aircraft use in firefighting operations.

24       (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—

1           (1) GROUND-BASED FIREFIGHTING OPER-  
2           ATIONS.—

3           (A) DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE.—

4           There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal  
5           year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter to the  
6           account established by subsection (a)(1) not  
7           more than \$3,000,000,000 for ground-based  
8           firefighting operations.

9           (B) DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.—

10          There is authorized to be appropriated for fiscal  
11          year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter to the  
12          account established by subsection (a)(2) not  
13          more than \$1,000,000,000 for ground-based  
14          firefighting operations.

15          (2) AIRCRAFT USE IN FIREFIGHTING OPER-  
16          ATIONS.—There is authorized to be appropriated for  
17          fiscal year 2024 and each fiscal year thereafter to  
18          the accounts established by subsection (a), a total  
19          amount of not more than \$500,000,000 for aircraft  
20          use in firefighting operations.

21          (d) PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET REQUESTS.—For fiscal  
22          year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, each Secretary  
23          concerned shall submit through the budget request of the  
24          President and in accordance with subsection (c), a request  
25          for amounts in the Wildland Fire Management appropria-

1 tion account of the Secretary concerned to carry out the  
2 activities described in subsection (e).

3 (e) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall use  
5 amounts provided to the respective accounts estab-  
6 lished under subsection (a) as follows:

7 (A) The Secretary of Agriculture shall use  
8 amounts appropriated under subsection  
9 (c)(1)(A) to carry out management activities for  
10 active wildfires through the Forest Service, ex-  
11 cept that none of the amounts may be used for  
12 the operation of aircraft.

13 (B) The Secretary of the Interior shall use  
14 amounts appropriated under subsection  
15 (c)(1)(B) to carry out management activities  
16 for active wildfires, except that none of the  
17 amounts may be used for the operation of air-  
18 craft.

19 (C) The Secretary concerned shall use  
20 amounts appropriated under subsection (e)(2)  
21 to acquire, by contract or purchase, and use  
22 aircraft, including unmanned aerial systems, for  
23 operations relating to wildland fires.

24 (2) LIMITATION.—The Secretary concerned  
25 shall not use to carry out any activity authorized by

1 paragraph (1)(C) amounts appropriated to accounts  
2 of the Secretary concerned other than amounts in  
3 the accounts established by subsection (a) specified  
4 for activities described in subsection (b)(2).

5 (f) ACCOUNTING REPORTS.—

6 (1) IN GENERAL.—Each Secretary concerned  
7 shall submit to the congressional committees month-  
8 ly accounting reports regarding the amounts that  
9 have been obligated and expended under this section  
10 during the preceding month of the applicable fiscal  
11 year.

12 (2) INCLUSIONS.—Each report under para-  
13 graph (1) shall include a description of, with respect  
14 to the period covered by the report—

15 (A) Federal ground-based equipment costs;

16 (B) Federal aircraft use costs;

17 (C) Federal personnel costs;

18 (D) on-incident and off-incident support  
19 costs; and

20 (E) funding allocated from the Wildland  
21 Fire Management account of the Secretary con-  
22 cerned to pay for administrative costs.

23 (3) REQUIREMENTS.—Each report under para-  
24 graph (1) shall be prepared in accordance with ap-  
25 plicable national fire plan reporting procedures.

1 **SEC. 102. REIMBURSEMENT FOR WILDFIRES CAUSED BY**  
2 **MILITARY TRAINING.**

3 (a) REIMBURSEMENT REQUIRED.—The Secretary of  
4 Defense shall, on application by a State or Federal agency,  
5 reimburse the State or Federal agency for the reasonable  
6 costs of the State or Federal agency for services provided  
7 in connection with fire suppression as a result of a fire  
8 caused by military training or other actions carried out  
9 by the Armed Forces or employees of the Department of  
10 Defense.

11 (b) LIMITATION.—Services reimbursable under sub-  
12 section (a) shall be limited to services proximately related  
13 to the fire for which reimbursement is sought.

14 (c) APPLICATION.—Each application from a State or  
15 Federal agency for reimbursement for costs under sub-  
16 section (a) shall provide an itemized request of the services  
17 covered by the application, including the costs of the serv-  
18 ices.

19 (d) FUNDS.—Reimbursements under subsection (a)  
20 shall be made from amounts authorized to be appropriated  
21 to the Department of Defense for operation and mainte-  
22 nance.

23 **SEC. 103. STRATEGIC WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN-**  
24 **NING.**

25 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30,  
26 2026, the Secretary concerned shall, in accordance with



1 this section, establish a series of spatial fire management  
2 plans.

3 (b) USE OF EXISTING PLANS.—To comply with this  
4 section, the Secretary concerned may use a fire manage-  
5 ment plan in existence on the date of enactment of this  
6 Act.

7 (c) UPDATES.—To be valid, a spatial fire manage-  
8 ment plan established under this section shall not be in  
9 use for longer than the 10-year period beginning on the  
10 date on which the plan is established.

11 (d) SUB-UNIT PLANS.—The Secretary concerned  
12 shall establish a spatial fire management plan for each  
13 unit of Federal land with more than 10 acres of burnable  
14 vegetation under the jurisdiction of the Secretary con-  
15 cerned.

16 (e) CONTENTS.—For each spatial fire management  
17 plan established under this section, the Secretary con-  
18 cerned shall—

19 (1) base the plans on a landscape-scale risk as-  
20 sessment that includes—

21 (A) risks to firefighters;

22 (B) risks to communities;

23 (C) risks to highly valuable resources; and

24 (D) other relevant considerations deter-  
25 mined by the Secretary concerned;

1           (2) include direction, represented in spatial  
2 form, from land management plans and resource  
3 management plans;

4           (3) in coordination with States, delineate poten-  
5 tial wildland fire operational delineations that—

6                 (A) identify potential control locations; and

7                 (B) specify the places in which firefighters  
8 will not be sent because of the presence of un-  
9 acceptable risk, including areas determined by  
10 the Secretary concerned as—

11                     (i) exceeding a certain slope;

12                     (ii) containing too high of a volume of  
13 hazardous fuels, under certain weather  
14 conditions; or

15                     (iii) containing other known hazards;

16           (4) include a determination of average severe  
17 fire weather for the plan area;

18           (5) include prefire planning provisions;

19           (6) include a plan for postfire activities that—

20                 (A) would better enable a Burned Area  
21 Emergency Response Team working on a large  
22 fire incident to address emergency stabilization  
23 and erosion quickly; and

24                 (B) specifies ways in which the Burned  
25 Area Emergency Response Team would seek to

1           prevent the proliferation of invasive species in  
2           working on the large fire incident; and

3           (7) include, at a minimum, any other require-  
4           ment determined to be necessary by the Secretary  
5           concerned.

6           (f) CONSISTENCY WITH MANAGEMENT PLANS.—The  
7           spatial fire management plans established under this sec-  
8           tion shall be consistent with the fire management objec-  
9           tives and land management objectives in the applicable  
10          land management plan or resource management plan.

11          (g) REVISIONS TO LAND MANAGEMENT PLANS AND  
12          RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLANS.—A revision to a land  
13          management plan or resource management plan shall con-  
14          sider fire ecology and fire management in a manner that  
15          facilitates the issuance of direction for an incident re-  
16          sponse.

17          (h) ENGAGEMENT DURING LAND MANAGEMENT  
18          PLANNING.—A supervisory employee of the Department  
19          of the Interior or the Department of Agriculture that is  
20          funded through a Firefighting Operations account estab-  
21          lished under section 101 shall participate directly in the  
22          creation or revision of an applicable land management  
23          plan or resource management plan to incorporate an as-  
24          sessment, protocol, or plan developed under this Act into  
25          the planning process.

1 **SEC. 104. ACCOUNTS TO ASSIST COMMUNITIES IN PLAN-**  
2 **NING AND PREPARING FOR WILDFIRES.**

3 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNTS.—There are es-  
4 tablished in the Treasury of the United States the fol-  
5 lowing accounts:

6 (1) The Community-Supported Land-Use Plan-  
7 ning Assistance account for the Department of Agri-  
8 culture.

9 (2) The Community-Supported Land-Use Plan-  
10 ning Assistance account for the Department of the  
11 Interior.

12 (b) BUDGET ACTIVITIES WITHIN ACCOUNTS.—The  
13 following activities shall be specified for funding within  
14 each Community-Supported Land-Use Planning Assist-  
15 ance account established by subsection (a):

16 (1) The Firewise Program operated by the Na-  
17 tional Fire Protection Association.

18 (2) Community wildfire protection programs.

19 (3) The Fire-Adapted Communities Learning  
20 Network.

21 (4) Vegetation management by communities.

22 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
23 are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2024 and  
24 each fiscal year thereafter for the accounts established by  
25 subsection (a) such sums as are necessary to carry out  
26 this section, not to exceed \$200,000,000.

1 (d) PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET REQUESTS.—For fiscal  
2 year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, each Secretary  
3 concerned shall submit through the budget request of the  
4 President and in accordance with subsection (c), a request  
5 for amounts in the Wildland Fire Management appropria-  
6 tion account of the Secretary concerned to carry out the  
7 activities described in subsection (b).

8 (e) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary con-  
9 cerned shall use amounts in the accounts established by  
10 subsection (a) as follows:

11 (1) With respect to amounts appropriated for  
12 the activity described in subsection (b)(1), the Sec-  
13 retary concerned may—

14 (A) cosponsor the Firewise Program; and  
15 (B) support the expansion of the Firewise  
16 Communities/USA Recognition Program to ad-  
17 ditional at-risk communities.

18 (2) With respect to amounts appropriated for  
19 the activity described in subsection (b)(2), the Sec-  
20 retary concerned may provide assistance to at-risk  
21 communities to establish and revise—

22 (A) a community wildfire protection plan  
23 (as defined in section 101 of the Healthy For-  
24 ests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C.  
25 6511)); or

1 (B) a community evacuation plan.

2 (3) With respect to amounts appropriated for  
3 the activity described in subsection (b)(3), the Sec-  
4 retary concerned shall establish a small grant pro-  
5 gram to address local hazard reduction on Federal,  
6 State, or private land, subject to the conditions  
7 that—

8 (A) a grant provided under the program—

9 (i) may be awarded to an organization  
10 in an at-risk community to address, in a  
11 sole instance, a hazardous fuel in a specific  
12 location, including piling and burning, and  
13 implementing a prescribed fire on private  
14 land;

15 (ii) shall not exceed \$20,000; and

16 (iii) shall require cost-sharing assist-  
17 ance in an amount equal to not less than  
18 10 percent of the amount of the grant;

19 (B) the work identified for funding under  
20 the grant shall be accomplished by a team com-  
21 posed of, at a minimum—

22 (i) a private citizen;

23 (ii) a representative of a nonprofit or-  
24 ganization; and

1 (iii) a local fire department, including  
2 a volunteer fire department;

3 (C) to be eligible for a grant under the  
4 program, a strategic plan outlining the means  
5 by which the applicant will address a hazardous  
6 fuel shall be submitted to the Secretary con-  
7 cerned; and

8 (D) on completion of a grant project, the  
9 grant recipient shall—

10 (i) submit to the Secretary concerned  
11 a report; and

12 (ii) participate in training another  
13 grant recipient during the following fiscal  
14 year.

15 (4) With respect to amounts appropriated for  
16 the activity described in subsection (b)(4), the Sec-  
17 retary concerned may provide cost-sharing assistance  
18 for the establishment and operation of a local pro-  
19 gram in an at-risk community to assist homeowners  
20 in the disposal of brush and slash generated by haz-  
21 ard reduction activities.

22 **SEC. 105. COMMUNITY SUPPORT DURING DISASTER RE-**  
23 **SPONSE.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall establish a  
25 program to train and certify a citizen who wishes to be

1 able to volunteer to assist the Secretaries during a  
2 wildland fire incident.

3 (b) SERVICE.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall estab-  
5 lish several categories of service for each manner in  
6 which a volunteer certified under this section may  
7 provide assistance.

8 (2) DIRECT SUPPRESSION OF WILDLAND  
9 FIRES.—No volunteer certified under this section  
10 may engage in an operation to directly suppress a  
11 wildland fire.

12 (3) DIRECTION.—A volunteer under this section  
13 shall—

14 (A) report to a designee of an incident  
15 commander prior to providing any assistance on  
16 a wildland fire; and

17 (B) operate continuously under the direc-  
18 tion of the designee while providing assistance  
19 on a wildland fire.

20 (c) CERTIFICATION.—

21 (1) CRITERIA.—

22 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall  
23 certify volunteers to provide assistance for each  
24 category of service established under subsection

25 (b).



1 (B) ESTABLISHMENT OF CRITERIA.—The  
2 Secretaries shall establish criteria for a volun-  
3 teer to be certified for each category of service.

4 (C) ATTENDANCE.—Attendance at training  
5 conducted under paragraph (2) shall be 1 of the  
6 criteria established under subparagraph (B).

7 (D) ASSESSMENT.—The Secretaries shall  
8 assess the knowledge, skills, or abilities, of a  
9 person prior to certifying a person to become a  
10 volunteer.

11 (2) TRAINING.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall  
13 regularly conduct training for citizens who de-  
14 sire to be certified as volunteers.

15 (B) CONTENT.—The training shall include,  
16 at a minimum, a safety component in an effort  
17 to minimize inherent threats to volunteers and  
18 maximize the safety of a volunteer, to the max-  
19 imum extent practicable, as a volunteer pro-  
20 vides assistance on a wildland fire.

21 (C) FREQUENCY.—The Secretaries shall  
22 offer, at a minimum, 1 training session in each  
23 State with significant wildfire risk, not less  
24 than every 2 years.

25 (3) IDENTIFICATION.—

1 (A) IN GENERAL.—On the certification of  
 2 a volunteer, the Secretary concerned shall pro-  
 3 vide to the volunteer a means of identification  
 4 as a volunteer.

5 (B) DISPLAY.—A volunteer certified under  
 6 this section shall display, continuously while as-  
 7 sisting in a wildland fire, the means of identi-  
 8 fication.

## 9 **TITLE II—WILDFIRE DETECTION** 10 **AND SUPPRESSION SUPPORT**

### 11 **SEC. 201. WILDFIRE DETECTION EQUIPMENT.**

12 To the extent practicable, the Secretary concerned  
 13 shall—

14 (1) expedite the placement of wildfire detection  
 15 equipment, such as sensors, cameras, and other rel-  
 16 evant equipment, in areas at risk of wildfire;

17 (2) expand the use of satellite data to assist  
 18 wildfire response; and

19 (3) expedite any permitting required by the  
 20 Secretary concerned for the installation, mainte-  
 21 nance, or removal of wildfire detection equipment.

### 22 **SEC. 202. GRANT PROGRAM FOR SLIP-ON TANK UNITS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall establish a  
 24 program to award to an eligible State or unit of local gov-  
 25 ernment each year grants to acquire slip-on tank and

1 pump units (referred to in this section as “slip-on units”)  
2 for a surge capacity of resources for fire suppression.

3 (b) ELIGIBILITY.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—To be eligible to receive a  
5 grant under this section, a State or unit of local gov-  
6 ernment shall—

7 (A) submit an application at such time, in  
8 such manner, and containing such information  
9 as the Secretaries may require; and

10 (B) contribute non-Federal funds in ac-  
11 cordance with paragraph (2).

12 (2) COST-SHARE REQUIREMENTS.—The non-  
13 Federal share of the cost of acquiring slip-on units  
14 using a grant under this section shall be not less  
15 than 25 percent.

16 (c) USE OF FUNDS.—

17 (1) IN GENERAL.—Grants awarded under this  
18 section shall be used only for the acquisition of not  
19 fewer than 30 slip-on units.

20 (2) RESTRICTIONS.—A recipient of a grant  
21 under this section—

22 (A) shall be responsible for the cost of the  
23 maintenance and use of the slip-on units; and

24 (B) may not use grant funds for a cost de-  
25 scribed in subparagraph (A).

1 (d) REQUIREMENTS FOR OPERATION OF SLIP-ON  
2 UNITS.—A recipient of a grant under this section shall—

3 (1) in maintaining and storing the slip-on  
4 units—

5 (A) store and mount a slip-on unit on a ve-  
6 hicle only during—

7 (i) a period of extreme fire danger; or

8 (ii) an active wildland fire;

9 (B) designate a vehicle and personnel to be  
10 used with each slip-on unit;

11 (C) make any necessary modification to a  
12 designated vehicle to ensure compatibility with  
13 the use of the slip-on unit;

14 (D) train designated personnel to use the  
15 slip-on unit;

16 (E) ensure designated personnel possess el-  
17 elementary wildland fire management skills, in-  
18 cluding post-fire-front structure-protection tac-  
19 tics; and

20 (F) maintain each slip-on unit in good, us-  
21 able condition for a period of not fewer than 20  
22 years;

23 (2) during a large, active wildland fire—

24 (A) staff each designated vehicle equipped  
25 with a slip-on unit with—

1 (i) a person designated under para-  
2 graph (1)(B); and

3 (ii) a trained firefighter, regardless of  
4 whether the trained firefighter is paid, a  
5 volunteer, or off-duty but paid;

6 (B) organize each designated vehicle  
7 equipped with a slip-on unit into a team with  
8 other designated vehicles under the direction of  
9 a qualified task force leader; and

10 (C) use each designated vehicle equipped  
11 with a slip-on unit primarily for the purpose of  
12 following behind the wildland fire front—

13 (i) to prevent homes from igniting;  
14 and

15 (ii) to alert fire engines of structures  
16 that have ignited; and

17 (3) comply with any other requirements deter-  
18 mined to be necessary by the Secretaries, including  
19 any minimum requirements for a slip-on unit and  
20 any additional required equipment.

21 **SEC. 203. ASSISTANCE TO STATES FOR OPERATION OF AIR**  
22 **TANKERS.**

23 The Secretary concerned may provide funding to  
24 States to enable States to operate not more than 50 sin-  
25 gle-engine air tankers if—

1           (1) the single-engine air tanker is government-  
2 owned and contractor-operated or government-owned  
3 and government-operated;

4           (2) a State receiving funding for a single-engine  
5 air tanker under this section shares the cost with  
6 the Secretary of the acquisition and operation of the  
7 aircraft; and

8           (3) the single-engine air tanker—

9                   (A) shall be used for initial attack; and

10                   (B) shall not be used for large fire aviation  
11 support.

12 **SEC. 204. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNMANNED**  
13 **AIRCRAFT SYSTEM FIRE APPLICATIONS.**

14 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15           (1) COVERED UNMANNED AIRCRAFT TEST  
16 RANGE.—The term “covered unmanned aircraft test  
17 range” means a test range that is approved of or  
18 designated by the Administrator of the Federal  
19 Aviation Administration for the testing of unmanned  
20 aircraft systems, as required under section 44803 of  
21 title 49, United States Code.

22           (2) UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYSTEM.—The term  
23 “unmanned aircraft system” means an unmanned  
24 aircraft and associated elements (including commu-  
25 nication links and the components that control the

1 unmanned aircraft) that are required for the oper-  
2 ator to operate safely and efficiently in the national  
3 airspace system of the Federal Aviation Administra-  
4 tion.

5 (b) JOINT FIRE SCIENCE PROGRAM.—The Secretary  
6 of the Interior shall, acting through the Joint Fire Science  
7 Program, work with covered unmanned aircraft test  
8 ranges to carry out research and development of un-  
9 manned aircraft system fire applications.

10 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
11 are authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of the  
12 Interior such sums as are necessary to carry out this sec-  
13 tion.

14 **SEC. 205. STUDY ON EFFECTS OF DRONE INCURSIONS ON**  
15 **WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION.**

16 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

17 (1) DRONE.—The term “drone” means an un-  
18 manned aircraft system owned by a private indi-  
19 vidual or entity.

20 (2) DRONE INCURSION.—The term “drone in-  
21 cursion” means the operation of a drone within any  
22 airspace for which the Administrator of the Federal  
23 Aviation Administration has issued a temporary  
24 flight restriction because of a wildfire.

1           (3) SECRETARY.—The term “Secretary” means  
2           the Secretary of the Interior, acting through the Di-  
3           rector of the Bureau of Land Management.

4           (b) STUDY REQUIRED.—The Secretary, in consulta-  
5           tion with the Secretary of Agriculture, acting through the  
6           Chief of the Forest Service, shall conduct a study on the  
7           effects of drone incursions on wildfire suppression with re-  
8           spect to land managed by the Department of the Interior  
9           or the Department of Agriculture.

10          (c) STUDY CONTENTS.—In conducting the study re-  
11          quired under subsection (b), the Secretary shall—

12                 (1) determine, for each of the 5 most recent  
13                 calendar years—

14                         (A) the number of occurrences in which a  
15                         drone incursion interfered with wildfire suppres-  
16                         sion; and

17                         (B) the effect of each occurrence described  
18                         in subparagraph (A) on—

19                                 (i) the length of time required to  
20                                 achieve complete suppression;

21                                 (ii) the effectiveness of aerial fire-  
22                                 fighting responses; and

23                                 (iii) the amounts expended by the  
24                                 Federal Government; and



1           (2) evaluate the feasibility and effectiveness of  
2 various actions to prevent drone incursions, includ-  
3 ing—

4           (A) the use of reasonable force to disable,  
5 damage, or destroy a drone;

6           (B) the seizure of a drone, including sei-  
7 zure with a net device; and

8           (C) the dissemination of educational mate-  
9 rials relating to the effects of drone incursions  
10 on wildfire suppression.

11       (d) REPORT.—Not later than 18 months after the  
12 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit  
13 to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of  
14 the Senate and the Committee on Natural Resources of  
15 the House of Representatives a report describing—

16           (1) the findings of the study required under  
17 subsection (b); and

18           (2) any recommendations of the Secretary relat-  
19 ing to those findings.

20 **SEC. 206. STUDY ON WILDFIRE DETECTION EQUIPMENT**  
21 **AND INTEGRATION OF ARTIFICIAL INTEL-**  
22 **LIGENCE TECHNOLOGIES.**

23       (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall conduct a  
24 study on—

1           (1) the effectiveness and limitations on the de-  
2           ployment and application of each wildfire detection  
3           equipment technology with respect to detection, con-  
4           firmation, geolocation, predictability of wildfire  
5           spread, suppression resource management, post-fire  
6           forensics, and surface rehabilitation;

7           (2) how each technology described in paragraph  
8           (1), with proper and timely deployment and use, can  
9           provide for the most effective and efficient means of  
10          dealing with the threat and the reality of wildland  
11          fires;

12          (3) the integration of artificial intelligence with  
13          real-time imagery and weather data provided by  
14          wildfire detection equipment technology; and

15          (4) how the integration of artificial intelligence  
16          described in paragraph (3) can enhance the value of  
17          each wildfire detection equipment technology, indi-  
18          vidually and collectively.

19          (b) SUBMISSION AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Not  
20          later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act,  
21          the Secretaries shall submit to the congressional commit-  
22          tees and make publicly available the results of the study  
23          conducted under subsection (a).

1 **TITLE III—POST-FIRE RECOVERY**  
2 **SUPPORT**

3 **SEC. 301. FUNDING FOR ONLINE GUIDES FOR POST-FIRE**  
4 **ASSISTANCE.**

5 (a) USE OF SERVICES OF OTHER AGENCIES.—Sec-  
6 tion 201(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and  
7 Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131(a)) is amend-  
8 ed—

9 (1) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at  
10 the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (2) by adding at the end the following:

12 “(8) post-disaster assistance.”.

13 (b) FUNDING FOR ONLINE GUIDES FOR ASSIST-  
14 ANCE.—Section 201 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster  
15 Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131)  
16 is amended by adding at the end the following:

17 “(e) FUNDING FOR ONLINE GUIDES FOR ASSIST-  
18 ANCE.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the  
20 Federal Emergency Management Agency may enter  
21 into a cooperative agreement to provide funding to  
22 a State agency established under subsection (c) to  
23 establish and operate a website to provide informa-  
24 tion relating to post-fire recovery funding and re-

1 sources to a community or an individual impacted by  
2 a wildland fire.

3 “(2) MANAGEMENT.—A website created under  
4 this subsection shall be—

5 “(A) managed by the State agency; and

6 “(B) suitable for the residents of the State  
7 of the State agency.

8 “(3) CONTENT.—The Administrator may enter  
9 into a cooperative agreement to establish a website  
10 under this subsection only to provide 1 or more of  
11 the following:

12 “(A) A list of Federal, State, and local  
13 sources of post-fire recovery funding or assist-  
14 ance that may be available to a community  
15 after a wildfire.

16 “(B) A list of Federal, State, and local  
17 sources of post-fire recovery funding or assist-  
18 ance that may be available to an individual im-  
19 pacted by a wildfire.

20 “(C) A technical guide that lists and ex-  
21 plains the costs and benefits of alternatives  
22 available to a community to mitigate the im-  
23 pacts of wildfire and prepare for potential flood-  
24 ing.

1           “(4) COOPERATION.—A State agency that en-  
2           ters into a cooperative agreement under this sub-  
3           section shall cooperate with the Secretary of the In-  
4           terior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Admin-  
5           istrator of the Federal Emergency Management  
6           Agency in developing a website under this sub-  
7           section.

8           “(5) UPDATES.—A State agency that receives  
9           funding to establish a website under this subsection  
10          shall update the website not less than once every 6  
11          years.”.

12 **SEC. 302. LONG-TERM BURNED AREA RECOVERY ACCOUNT.**

13          (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNT.—There is estab-  
14          lished in the Treasury of the United States the Long-  
15          Term Burned Area Recovery account for the Department  
16          of Agriculture.

17          (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There  
18          are authorized to be appropriated for fiscal year 2024 and  
19          each fiscal year thereafter for the account established by  
20          subsection (a) such sums as are necessary to carry out  
21          the activities described in subsection (d), not to exceed  
22          \$100,000,000.

23          (c) PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET REQUESTS.—For fiscal  
24          year 2025 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary  
25          of Agriculture shall submit through the budget request of

1 the President and in accordance with subsection (b), a re-  
2 quest for amounts in the Wildland Fire Management ap-  
3 propriation account to carry out the activities described  
4 in subsection (d).

5 (d) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary of Ag-  
6 riculture shall use amounts in the account established by  
7 subsection (a) for rehabilitation projects—

8 (1) that begin not earlier than 1 year after the  
9 date on which the wildfire was contained;

10 (2) that are—

11 (A) scheduled to be completed not later  
12 than 3 years after the date on which the wild-  
13 fire was contained; and

14 (B) located at sites impacted by wildfire on  
15 non-Federal or Federal land;

16 (3) that restore the functions of an ecosystem  
17 or protect life or property; and

18 (4) not less than 10 percent of the total costs  
19 of which are paid for with non-Federal funds.

20 (e) PRIORITIZATION OF FUNDING.—The Secretary of  
21 Agriculture shall prioritize, on a nationwide basis, projects  
22 for which funding requests are submitted under this sec-  
23 tion, based on—

24 (1) downstream effects on water resources; and

25 (2) public safety.

1 **SEC. 303. PRIZE FOR WILDFIRE-RELATED INVASIVE SPE-**  
 2 **CIES REDUCTION.**

3 Section 7001(d) of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Con-  
 4 servation, Management, and Recreation Act (16 U.S.C.  
 5 742b note; Public Law 116–9) is amended—

6 (1) by striking “paragraph (8)(A)” each place  
 7 it appears and inserting “paragraph (9)(A)”;

8 (2) by striking “paragraph (8)(B)” each place  
 9 it appears and inserting “paragraph (9)(B)”;

10 (3) by redesignating paragraph (8) as para-  
 11 graph (9);

12 (4) by inserting after paragraph (7) the fol-  
 13 lowing:

14 “(8) THEODORE ROOSEVELT GENIUS PRIZE  
 15 FOR MANAGEMENT OF WILDFIRE-RELATED INVASIVE  
 16 SPECIES.—

17 “(A) DEFINITIONS.—In this paragraph:

18 “(i) BOARD.—The term ‘Board’  
 19 means the Management of Wildfire-Related  
 20 Invasive Species Technology Advisory  
 21 Board established by subparagraph (C)(i).

22 “(ii) PRIZE COMPETITION.—The term  
 23 ‘prize competition’ means the Theodore  
 24 Roosevelt Genius Prize for the manage-  
 25 ment of wildfire-related invasive species es-  
 26 tablished under subparagraph (B).

1           “(B) AUTHORITY.—Not later than 180  
2 days after the date of enactment of the Western  
3 Wildfire Support Act of 2023, the Secretary  
4 shall establish under section 24 of the Steven-  
5 son-Wylder Technology Innovation Act of 1980  
6 (15 U.S.C. 3719) a prize competition, to be  
7 known as the ‘Theodore Roosevelt Genius Prize  
8 for the management of wildfire-related invasive  
9 species’—

10           “(i) to encourage technological innova-  
11 tion with the potential to advance the mis-  
12 sion of the National Invasive Species  
13 Council with respect to the management of  
14 wildfire-related invasive species; and

15           “(ii) to award 1 or more prizes annu-  
16 ally for a technological advancement that  
17 manages wildfire-related invasive species.

18           “(C) ADVISORY BOARD.—

19           “(i) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is es-  
20 tablished an advisory board, to be known  
21 as the ‘Management of Wildfire-Related  
22 Invasive Species Technology Advisory  
23 Board’.

24           “(ii) COMPOSITION.—The Board shall  
25 be composed of not fewer than 9 members



1 appointed by the Secretary, who shall pro-  
2 vide expertise in—

3 “(I) invasive species;

4 “(II) biology;

5 “(III) technology development;

6 “(IV) engineering;

7 “(V) economics;

8 “(VI) business development and  
9 management;

10 “(VII) wildfire; and

11 “(VIII) any other discipline, as  
12 the Secretary determines to be nec-  
13 essary to achieve the purposes of this  
14 paragraph.

15 “(iii) DUTIES.—Subject to clause (iv),  
16 with respect to the prize competition, the  
17 Board shall—

18 “(I) select a topic;

19 “(II) issue a problem statement;

20 “(III) advise the Secretary re-  
21 garding any opportunity for techno-  
22 logical innovation to manage wildfire-  
23 related invasive species; and

24 “(IV) advise winners of the prize  
25 competition regarding opportunities to

1 pilot and implement winning tech-  
2 nologies in relevant fields, including in  
3 partnership with conservation organi-  
4 zations, Federal or State agencies,  
5 federally recognized Indian Tribes,  
6 private entities, and research institu-  
7 tions with expertise or interest relat-  
8 ing to the management of wildfire-re-  
9 lated invasive species.

10 “(iv) CONSULTATION.—In selecting a  
11 topic and issuing a problem statement for  
12 the prize competition, the Board shall con-  
13 sult widely with Federal and non-Federal  
14 stakeholders, including—

15 “(I) 1 or more Federal agencies  
16 with jurisdiction over the management  
17 of invasive species;

18 “(II) 1 or more Federal agencies  
19 with jurisdiction over the management  
20 of wildfire;

21 “(III) 1 or more State agencies  
22 with jurisdiction over the management  
23 of invasive species;

1                   “(IV) 1 or more State agencies  
2                   with jurisdiction over the management  
3                   of wildfire;

4                   “(V) 1 or more State, regional,  
5                   or local wildlife organizations, the  
6                   mission of which relates to the man-  
7                   agement of invasive species; and

8                   “(VI) 1 or more wildlife con-  
9                   servation groups, technology compa-  
10                  nies, research institutions, institutions  
11                  of higher education, industry associa-  
12                  tions, or individual stakeholders with  
13                  an interest in the management of  
14                  wildfire-related invasive species.

15                  “(v) REQUIREMENTS.—The Board  
16                  shall comply with all requirements under  
17                  paragraph (9)(A).

18                  “(D) ADMINISTRATION BY THE NATIONAL  
19                  INVASIVE SPECIES COUNCIL.—The Secretary,  
20                  acting through the Director of the National  
21                  Invasive Species Council, shall administer the  
22                  prize competition.

23                  “(E) JUDGES.—

24                  “(i) APPOINTMENT.—The Secretary  
25                  shall appoint not fewer than 3 judges who

1 shall, except as provided in clause (ii), se-  
2 lect the 1 or more annual winners of the  
3 prize competition.

4 “(ii) DETERMINATION BY SEC-  
5 RETARY.—The judges appointed under  
6 clause (i) shall not select any annual win-  
7 ner of the prize competition if the Sec-  
8 retary makes a determination that, in any  
9 fiscal year, none of the technological ad-  
10 vancements entered into the prize competi-  
11 tion merits an award.

12 “(F) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later  
13 than 60 days after the date on which a cash  
14 prize is awarded under this paragraph, the Sec-  
15 retary shall submit to the Committee on Energy  
16 and Natural Resources of the Senate and the  
17 Committee on Natural Resources of the House  
18 of Representatives a report on the prize com-  
19 petition that includes—

20 “(i) a statement by the Board that  
21 describes the activities carried out by the  
22 Board relating to the duties described in  
23 subparagraph (C)(iii);

1           “(ii) a description of the 1 or more  
2           annual winners of the prize competition;  
3           and

4           “(iii) a statement by 1 or more of the  
5           judges appointed under subparagraph (E)  
6           that explains the basis on which the 1 or  
7           more winners of the prize competition was  
8           selected.

9           “(G) TERMINATION OF AUTHORITY.—The  
10          Board and all authority provided under this  
11          paragraph shall terminate on December 31,  
12          2028.”; and

13          (5) in paragraph (9) (as so redesignated)—

14                 (A) in subparagraph (A), in the matter  
15                 preceding clause (i), by striking “or (7)(C)(i)”  
16                 and inserting “(7)(C)(i), or (8)(C)(i)”; and

17                 (B) in subparagraph (B)—

18                         (i) in the matter preceding clause (i),  
19                         by striking “or (7)(D)(i)” and inserting  
20                         “(7)(D)(i), or (8)(D)(i)”; and

21                         (ii) in clause (i)(VII), by striking  
22                         “and (7)(E)” and inserting “(7)(E), and  
23                         (8)(E)”.

○