

107TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 3948

To improve implementation of the National Fire Plan on Federal lands managed by the Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 12, 2002

Mr. UDALL of Colorado (for himself, Mr. HEFLEY, and Mr. UDALL of New Mexico) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Agriculture, and in addition to the Committee on Resources, 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 improve implementation of the National Fire Plan on Federal lands managed by the Forest Service and agencies of the Department of the Interior.

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. FINDINGS, PURPOSE, AND DEFINITIONS.**

4 (a) FINDINGS.—The Congress makes the following
5 findings:

6 (1) A primary purpose of the National Fire
7 Plan is to reduce the risk of severe wild fires in the

1 areas, known as the “wildland/urban interface”,
2 where communities adjoin or intermingle with Fed-
3 eral public lands.

4 (2) Substantial amounts of funds have been ap-
5 propriated to the Forest Service and agencies of the
6 Department of the Interior to implement the Na-
7 tional Fire Plan.

8 (3) The Comptroller General has found that im-
9 plementation of the National Fire Plan still lacks
10 clearly defined and effective leadership and that the
11 Forest Service and agencies of the Department of
12 the Interior do not have adequate data for making
13 informed decisions and for measuring their progress.

14 (4) In a December 2001 report to the Secretary
15 of the Interior, the National Academy of Public In-
16 formation recommended establishment of an inter-
17 agency council to implement both the Federal
18 Wildland Fire Management Policy and the National
19 Fire Plan.

20 (b) PURPOSE.—The purpose of this Act is to improve
21 implementation of the National Fire Plan with respect to
22 reducing the buildup of vegetative fuels in the wildland/
23 urban interface.

24 (c) DEFINITIONS.—In this Act:

1 (1) FEDERAL PUBLIC LANDS.—The term “Fed-
2 eral public lands” means lands managed by the For-
3 est Service or an agency of the Department of the
4 Interior.

5 (2) NATIONAL FIRE PLAN.—The term “Na-
6 tional Fire Plan” means the plans, strategies,
7 projects, and activities of the Department of Agri-
8 culture and the Department of the Interior to re-
9 spond to adverse impacts on communities and the
10 environment from wildfires on Federal public lands,
11 which are based on and reflect the following:

12 (A) The report of the Secretary of Agri-
13 culture and the Secretary of the Interior enti-
14 tled “Managing the Impact of Wildfires on
15 Communities and the Environment”, dated
16 September 8, 2000.

17 (B) Congressional direction accompanying
18 appropriations to the Department of Agri-
19 culture and the Department of the Interior for
20 wildland fire management for fiscal year 2001
21 and subsequent years.

22 (3) WILDLIFE/URBAN INTERFACE.—The term
23 “wildland/urban interface” means a geographic area
24 where—

1 (A) homes and other structures are imme-
2 diately adjacent to or intermixed with Federal
3 public lands containing flammable vegetation;

4 (B) the conditions on such lands are con-
5 ducive to large-scale disturbance events; and

6 (C) there is a significant probability of a
7 fire ignition and a resulting spread of the dis-
8 turbance event.

9 **SEC. 2. INTERAGENCY COUNCIL TO COORDINATE IMPLE-**
10 **MENTATION OF NATIONAL FIRE PLAN.**

11 (a) ESTABLISHMENT AND MEMBERSHIP.—The Sec-
12 retary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture
13 shall establish an interagency council to coordinate imple-
14 mentation of the National Fire Plan. The council shall in-
15 clude at a minimum the following members, or their des-
16 ignees:

17 (1) The Chief of the Forest Service.

18 (2) The Assistant Secretary of the Interior for
19 Indian Affairs.

20 (3) The Director of the Bureau of Land Man-
21 agement.

22 (4) The Director of the National Park Service.

23 (5) The Director of the United States Fish and
24 Wildlife Service.

25 (b) DUTIES.—

1 (1) CRITERIA TO IDENTIFY AFFECTED COMMU-
2 NITIES.—Not later than 180 days after the date of
3 the enactment of this Act, the council shall define
4 consistent criteria to identify the communities within
5 the wildland/urban interface that are most at risk
6 from severe wildfires.

7 (2) GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PLAN.—The
8 council shall establish clearly defined and outcome-
9 oriented goals and objectives for agencies responsible
10 for implementation of the National Fire Plan.

11 (3) MEASUREMENT OF RESULTS.—The council
12 shall establish quantifiable annual and long-term
13 performance measures to assess progress in reducing
14 the risks to communities identified pursuant to cri-
15 teria required by paragraph (1).

16 (4) LONG-TERM IMPLEMENTATION STRAT-
17 EGY.—The council shall develop a comprehensive
18 long-term strategy for implementation of the Na-
19 tional Fire Plan that incorporates the criteria, goals
20 and objectives, and performance measures defined or
21 established under paragraphs (1), (2), and (3).

22 (5) USE OF REMOVED MATERIALS.—The coun-
23 cil shall provide for collection of data necessary to
24 assist the Secretary of Agriculture and the Secretary
25 of the Interior to determine the most effective and

1 appropriate methods of utilizing fuel materials re-
2 moved from Federal public lands covered by the Na-
3 tional Fire Plan.

4 (c) CONSULTATION.—In defining the criteria and es-
5 tablishing the goals and objectives required by subsection
6 (b), the council shall consult with appropriate State, local,
7 and tribal officials and shall provide an opportunity for
8 receipt and consideration of public comments and sugges-
9 tions.

10 **SEC. 3. FOCUS OF FUEL-REDUCTION EFFORTS.**

11 In implementing the National Fire Plan, the Sec-
12 retary of Agriculture and the Secretary of the Interior
13 shall assure that—

14 (1) in conducting fuel-reduction efforts, priority
15 is given to the communities identified pursuant to
16 the criteria required by section 2(b)(1); and

17 (2) no other projects to reduce fuels are carried
18 out in a State until all necessary fuel-reduction ef-
19 forts with respect to such communities in that State
20 are completed.

21 **SEC. 4. PROGRESS REPORT.**

22 Not later than one year after the date of the enact-
23 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture and the Sec-

- 1 Secretary of the Interior shall submit to Congress a report
- 2 on the steps taken to implement this Act.

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