

REQUESTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996 SUPPLEMENTAL AP-
PROPRIATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENTS OF AGRI-
CULTURE, THE INTERIOR, AND VETERANS AFFAIRS,
ALSO MAKING AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS TOTAL-
ING \$50 MILLION IN BUDGET AUTHORITY TO THE
DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOP-
MENT

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

TRANSMITTING

HIS REQUEST TO MAKE AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS TOTALING \$300,000,000 IN BUDGET AUTHORITY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, \$100,000,000 IN BUDGET AUTHORITY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, A \$100,000,000 SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST FOR VETERANS COMPENSATION AND PENSIONS, AND MAKING AVAILABLE APPROPRIATIONS TOTALING \$50,000,000 IN BUDGET AUTHORITY TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND TO DESIGNATE THE AMOUNTS MADE AVAILABLE AS AN EMERGENCY REQUIREMENT PURSUANT TO SECTION 251(b)(2)(D)(i) OF THE BALANCED BUDGET AND EMERGENCY DEFICIT CONTROL ACT OF 1985, AS AMENDED, PURSUANT TO 31 U.S.C. 1107



SEPTEMBER 17, 1996.—Referred to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered to be printed

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THE WHITE HOUSE,
Washington, September 12, 1996.

The SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SIR: I ask Congress to consider requests for FY 1996 supplemental appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior, and Veterans Affairs.

These requests include: (1) supplemental funding totaling \$300 million for the Department of Agriculture and \$100 million for the Department of the Interior to address urgent needs arising from recent wildland fires; and, (2) a \$100 million supplemental request for Veterans Compensation and Pensions, a mandatory item that the Senate added on September 5th to H.R. 3666, the Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 1997.

I hereby designate the following requests for FY 1996 supplemental appropriations as emergency requirements pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended:

Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Wildland fire management: \$300,000,000;

Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Wildland fire management: \$50,000,000.

To address potential further needs resulting from the devastating effects of the current wildland fires, this package of FY 1996 requests includes \$50 million in budget authority for the Department of the Interior that would be made available upon my transmittal of a later budget request to the Congress designating the specific amount requested as an emergency requirement, pursuant to the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

Also, in accordance with P.L. 104-134, the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996, I hereby make available appropriations totaling \$50 million in budget authority to the Department of Housing and Urban Development for Community Development Block Grants. These funds will be used to address urgent needs arising from the consequences of heavy rains and flooding occurring between the beginning of fiscal year 1996 and April 26, 1996, the date of the enactment of the legislation.

I designate the \$50 million made available in accordance with P.L. 104-134 as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

The details of these actions are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Acting Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I concur with his comments and observations.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

Enclosures.



Estimate No. 24
104th Congress, 2nd Session

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

September 12, 1996

The President

The White House

Submitted for your consideration are requests for FY 1996 supplemental appropriations for the Departments of Agriculture, the Interior, and Veterans Affairs.

The requests for additional FY 1996 funding include:

- o \$300 million for the Forest Service (Department of Agriculture) and \$100 million for the Department of the Interior for emergency wildland firefighting, \$50 million of which would be a contingent emergency appropriation.
- o \$100 million for the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Compensation and Pensions.

The wildfires in the western states are among the worst in recent memory. As of September 9th, the number of fires for the year are estimated at 88,486 fires. This compares to a five-year average of 58,398 fires per year. Two times more acres have burned this year than in an average year. As of September 9th, an estimated 5.8 million acres had burned, compared with a five-year average of 2.1 million acres per year.

I recommend that you designate the \$300 million for emergency firefighting activities of the Department of Agriculture and \$50 million of the \$100 million for emergency firefighting activities of the Department of the Interior as emergency funding requirements in accordance with section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985.

Also submitted for your consideration is a request to make available emergency Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) appropriations totaling \$50 million for the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Your approval of this request would make available contingent emergency funds appropriated in P.L. 104-134, the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996. These funds would be used to pay for the costs of disaster relief arising from the consequences of heavy flooding occurring between October 1, 1995, and April 26, 1996, the date of the enactment of the legislation.

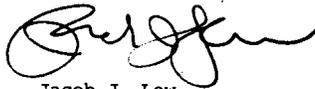
I recommend that you designate the \$50 million in CDBG funding requested to be made available as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251 (b) (2) (D) (i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended. No additional action by Congress will be required to make these funds available.

Areas of the East Coast have recently experienced the damaging effects of Hurricane Fran. At this time, assessments of damage are incomplete as are the implications of the damage for the Federal response. The Federal Emergency Management Agency and other departments and agencies involved in addressing the consequences of the storm will be evaluating the availability of resources against the work to be done over the coming weeks. It is possible that recommendations for additional resources to address the consequences of Hurricane Fran -- or other potential natural disasters -- may be presented for your consideration at a later date.

An additional \$100 million is required to pay increased veterans benefits. The veterans pension program is a means-tested program where the amount of monthly cash benefit varies based on a beneficiary's income level. Retroactive payments are required by law to correct past under-payments. This year's retroactive payments were higher than originally estimated. On September 5th, in response to information provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs and OMB, the Senate added \$100 million to address this situation to H.R. 3666, the Veterans Affairs, Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Bill, FY 1997. This package would formally transmit your request.

I have carefully reviewed these proposals and am satisfied that they are necessary at this time. Therefore, I join the Secretaries of Agriculture, the Interior, Housing and Urban Development, and Veterans Affairs in recommending that you approve these requests by signing the enclosed letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Sincerely,



Jacob J. Lew
Acting Director

Enclosures

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

FOREST SERVICE

Wildland Fire Management

In addition, for necessary expenses for pre-suppression due to emergencies, for emergency fire suppression on or adjacent to National Forest System lands or other lands under fire protection agreement, and for emergency rehabilitation of burned over National Forest System lands, \$300,000,000, to remain available until expended. Provided, That such funds are available for repayment of advances from other appropriations accounts previously transferred for such purposes; Provided further, That the entire amount is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251 (b) (2) (D) (i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended.

Additional funding is required for the cost of wildland fires on National Forest lands. This year's fire season has been one of the worst in several years; more than twice as many acres have burned to date than in the average fire year. Extreme burning conditions exist throughout most of the West. Federal resource mobilization has been at its highest level through most of August and into September; all resources are currently committed. This has resulted in expenditures by the Forest Service of approximately \$3 million per day. Available appropriations for firefighting were exhausted in early August.

This FY 1996 shortfall in firefighting funds has been covered to date using the Forest Service's existing authority under current law to borrow from trust fund balances, specifically, from the Cooperative Work Trust Fund (Knutsen-Vandenberg [KV] Trust Fund). This trust fund is permanently appropriated and is used to reforest harvested land, improve future timber productivity and accomplish other sale area mitigation and enhancement work. This includes such activities as making wildlife habitat improvements.

The KV fund's balance is now at a level insufficient to meet expected FY 1997 requirements. This request would partially restore the KV fund to ensure that sufficient funding is available to fulfill estimated FY 1997 obligations.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Wildland Fire Management

For an additional amount for "Wildland Fire Management".
\$50,000,000, to remain available until expended.

In addition, for emergency rehabilitation and wildfire suppression activities of the Department of the Interior, \$50,000,000, to remain available until expended: Provided, That these funds, or any portion thereof, shall be made available only (1) to the extent that an official budget request for a specific dollar amount, that includes designation of the entire amount of the request as an emergency requirement as defined in the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, as amended, is transmitted by the President to Congress; and (2) if the amounts annually appropriated under this heading, but not designated as emergency requirements pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985, have been at least equal to the most recent ten-year historical average: Provided, That the total \$100,000,000 provided herein is designated by the Congress as an emergency requirement pursuant to section 251(b)(2)(D)(i) of such Act.

Additional funding is required to fight forest fires on Department of the Interior (DOI) lands. FY 1996 has been an active fire year thus far, with major early season wildfires in Texas and Oklahoma, and significant additional fire activity in New Mexico, Arizona, California, and Oregon. Within recent weeks, there have been large wildfires in nearly every western State of the country.

The shortfall in firefighting funds has been covered by using \$51.2 million that was made available through contingent emergency funds appropriated in the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, FY 1993 (P.L. 102-381). However, it is anticipated that this amount will not be enough to cover DOI through this fire season. Therefore, an additional \$50 million is being requested for emergency suppression. Furthermore, \$50 million is requested to replenish the emergency contingency fund that was depleted this year.

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VETERANS BENEFITS ADMINISTRATION
Compensation and Pensions

For an additional amount for "Compensation and Pensions,"
\$100,000,000, to remain available until expended.

The increased compensation and pension benefit costs can be attributed to higher-than-expected average benefit payments in the veterans pensions program. The veterans pensions program is a means-tested program where the amount of monthly cash benefit varies based a beneficiary's income level. Retroactive payments are required by law to correct past under-payments. This year's retroactive payments were higher than expected.

**EMERGENCY APPROPRIATIONS: AMOUNTS PREVIOUSLY APPROPRIATED MADE
AVAILABLE BY THE PRESIDENT**

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Community Development Block Grants..... \$50,000,000

Chapter 10 of title II, the Supplemental Appropriations Act of 1996, of P.L. 104-134, the Omnibus Consolidated Rescissions and Appropriations Act of 1996, provided for \$50 million in contingent emergency funding for Community development grants. The funds were to remain available until September 30, 1998, for emergency expenses and repairs related to Presidentially-declared flood disasters occurring between October 1, 1995, and April 26, 1996, the date of the enactment of the legislation. The availability of these funds was made contingent upon Presidential notification to the Congress of his designation of this funding as an emergency requirement. None of the funds have yet been designated as an emergency requirement and made available.

The \$50 million will enable the Department of Housing and Urban Development to cover the costs of expenses and repairs related to Presidentially-declared flood disasters occurring between the beginning of fiscal year 1996 and April 26, 1996, the date of the enactment of the legislation.

