

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 15, 2026

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
190 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jeff Merkley
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Appropriations Committee
129 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chair Murkowski and Ranking Member Merkley:

As your subcommittee considers its fiscal year (FY) 2027 appropriations bill, we write to request that you provide no less than \$61.5 million for the U.S. Forest Service Forest and Rangeland Research and Development Programs (Forest Service R&D) and no less than \$212 million for salaries and expenses for staff to effectively execute the Forest Service R&D program.

Forest Service R&D advances science, technology, and innovation to improve the health and use of our Nation's forests and grasslands. These advances are critical for addressing the escalating challenges facing America's forests, rangelands, and communities.

The program's work, dating back to 1905, is foundational to solving some of the most pressing natural resource issues of our time. Forest Service scientists conduct research that land managers, states, Tribes, private landowners, and local governments rely on to make informed decisions about wildfire risk reduction, invasive species management, climate resilience, watershed protection, and sustainable forest products. Their findings directly support healthier forests, safer communities, and stronger rural economies.

The need for this research has never been greater. Wildfires, drought, and forest health crises are straining federal, state, and local resources. Forest Service R&D provides the science that allows for more effective fuel treatments such as prescribed fire, and better post fire recovery to establish more resilient forests. The program's work also advances innovations in carbon storage and climate smart land management — all of which help reduce costs and improve outcomes across the landscape.

Further, the Forest Service R&D program maintains a nationwide network of experimental forests and research stations that serve as living laboratories. These sites generate long term data that no other institution in the country can replicate. The program partners extensively with universities, state agencies, and Tribal nations ensuring that research investments benefit communities across the country.

We are very concerned about recent staff losses within Forest Service R&D and encourage sustained funding from previous fiscal years to ensure that the program can be effectively administered throughout the country. Forest Service personnel provide a unique network of expertise across the country that is invaluable to local communities as they experience increasing threats to their environment.

Sustained and enhanced funding for Forest Service R&D and staff is essential to maintaining this scientific capacity. Without it, land managers will lack the tools and information needed to protect lives, property, and natural resources in an era of rapidly changing conditions.

We ask that you support strong funding for the Forest Service Research and Development Program at no less than \$61.5 million and for salaries and expenses at no less than \$212 million in FY27. Continued investment in this program and staff is an investment in the safety, resilience, and economic vitality of communities nationwide.

Sincerely,



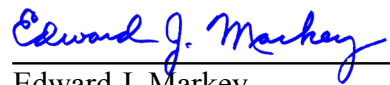
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



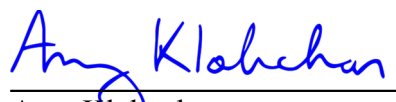
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar

United States Senator