

H.R. 2647, the Resilient Federal Forest Act of 2015

Ends fire borrowing in a fiscally responsible manner!

H.R. 2647, the Resilient Federal Forests Act of 2015, solves the long-standing fire borrowing problem and will end the Forest Service and Department of the Interior from having to rob from fire prevention accounts to pay for fire suppression.

Specifically, the bill allows the Forest Service or Department of Interior to request funds from FEMA within 30 days of all suppression funds being exhausted. FEMA would then transfer additional suppression funds to the agencies to fight fires. Again, funds may only be used for wildfire suppression.

Fire borrowing fluctuates greatly depending on weather conditions, precipitation, and forest health in addition to numerous other factors. This year, the Forest Service expects it will need to borrow \$200 million from non-fire accounts to pay for fire suppression.

Cost Containment Measures:

- The bill creates a wildfire disaster subaccount under the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF); this ensures that wildfire disaster funding does not compete with other natural disasters such as hurricanes.
- Any funds spent on state, local or private lands would be reimbursed to the Disaster Relief Fund. Other sources of funding through FEMA is already available for communities impacted by wildfires—this bill prevents any ‘double dipping’
- The bill only allows for the transfer of funds from FEMA if the agencies have been appropriated the 10-year average wildfire suppression costs and the agencies have exhausted all available suppression dollars (including carryover from previous years).
- The bill requires annual reports to Congress and the public on fire accounting, cost containment, lesson learned and other measures to help reduce the cost of firefighting.
- The bill does not create any new mandatory spending.
- The bill is subject to appropriations and still falls under the caps set in the Budget Control Act.

For more information, contact the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Federal Lands at (202) 226-7736.