

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

April 26, 2022

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland:

We applaud the commitment to support integrated responses to wildland fire in the Department of Interior's new five-year plan to reduce wildfire risk and write to draw your attention to the need to renew the Department's commitment to the century-old fire management agreement between the state and federal government in western Oregon.

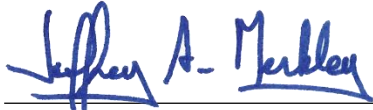
The checkerboard ownership pattern of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) forest lands in western Oregon is unique, and creates over 14,000 miles of jurisdictional boundary between federal, tribal, state, county and private timberlands. The complexity of managing fire situations in this area led to agreements to provide seamless protection by the Oregon Department of Forestry (ODF) and non-profit Forest Protective Associations (FPA) dating back to at least 1914. That arrangement has been a model of success and continues to this day, with the Western Oregon Operating Plan agreement between the State of Oregon and BLM.

The current agreement expires in 2024, and BLM has indicated to ODF and FPAs that it wants to reduce the scope of the agreement and reduce the number of covered acres. This is of great concern to us because of the ongoing risk of catastrophic fires in our state. In fact, many of the areas included in the agreement were recently designated high-risk "firesheds" by this administration. Western Oregon Indian tribes have also expressed concern that BLM has embarked on this path without any government-to-government consultation about the impacts to tribal land of a different fire protection scheme.

The explanatory statement that accompanied the enacted Fiscal Year 2022 Interior Appropriations bill provides clear direction to BLM moving forward. The language directs BLM to "continue the fire protection agreement with the State of Oregon to maintain or enhance the current level of fire protection for BLM-managed lands in Western Oregon."

The current fire protection arrangement has been a vital element of protecting Oregonians for over a century and we encourage you to renew the Department and BLM's commitment to this effective, interagency approach.

Sincerely,



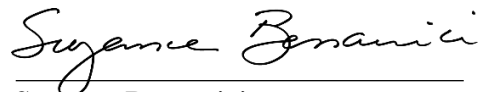
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United States Senator



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