

**Department of the Interior**  
**Wildland Fire Management**  
**Bipartisan Infrastructure Law**  
**Coordination**  
**March 1, 2022**

**Purpose:** This briefing paper discusses initial coordination by the Department of the Interior’s (DOI) Wildland Fire Management (WFM) program for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law [P.L.] [117-58](#), or the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law” [BIL]). To facilitate coordination, WFM bureaus and offices plan to develop initial draft estimates and recommendations for taking the next steps for coordinating workforce hiring and conversions, contracting, fuels management, post-fire restoration activities, and other actions that may be taken during the remainder of Fiscal Year (FY) 2022 to facilitate BIL planning efforts. To support these efforts, bureaus and offices are identifying points of contact for the BIL’s provisions.

**Background:** The BIL provides a total of \$1,458,000,000 over five years to DOI for WFM activities. This funding is intended to strengthen the resilience of communities and ecosystems from the threat of wildfires by making historic investments to increase and improve wildland fire workforce capacity and firefighters’ compensation; and forest and rangeland restoration, hazardous fuels management, science, technology to improve the early detection of wildfires, equipment for firefighters during response, and post-wildfire restoration activities.

The BIL funding is provided as emergency appropriations and is available for obligation until expended. Division J of the BIL further specifies in which fiscal year amounts become available for obligation from FY 2022-FY 2026, as reflected in Table 1 below. The BIL makes available \$407.6 million for FY 2022. These appropriations are in addition to annual appropriations and other supplemental funding (e.g., [P.L. 117-43](#)) provided for DOI WFM.

**Table 1**

		Wildland Fire Management Total Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funding Budget Authority					
(\$ in 000s)		FY 2022	FY 2023	FY 2024	FY 2025	FY 2026	Total
<b>Preparedness</b>							
Firefighter Salaries and Expenses	Workforce Reform	33,963	18,047	18,047	18,047	18,046	106,150
Preparedness	Other Preparedness	39,319	22,739	22,739	22,739	22,739	130,275
Preparedness	Administration	2,278	1,268	1,268	1,268	1,268	7,350
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer	380	211	211	211	212	1,225
Preparedness, Total		75,940	42,265	42,265	42,265	42,265	245,000
<b>Fuels Management</b>							
Fuels Management	Fuels Management	243,726	150,886	150,886	150,886	150,886	847,270
Fuels Management	Administration	7,572	4,692	4,692	4,692	4,692	26,340
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer	1,262	782	782	782	782	4,390
Fuels Management, Total		252,560	156,360	156,360	156,360	156,360	878,000
<b>Burned Area Rehabilitation</b>							
Burned Area Rehabilitation	Burned Area Rehabilitation	73,353	60,068	60,068	60,068	60,068	313,625
Burned Area Rehabilitation	Administration	2,280	1,868	1,868	1,867	1,867	9,750
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer	367	315	315	314	314	1,625
Burned Area Rehabilitation, Total		76,000	62,251	62,251	62,249	62,249	325,000
<b>Joint Fire Science</b>							
Fire Science Projects	Joint Fire Science Program	2,987	1,666	1,665	1,666	1,666	9,650
Joint Fire Science Program	Administration	93	51	52	52	52	300
Office of the Inspector General	Directed Transfer	20	7	7	8	8	50
Joint Fire Science, Total		3,100	1,724	1,724	1,726	1,726	10,000
<b>Wildland Fire Management, Total</b>		<b>407,600</b>	<b>262,600</b>	<b>262,600</b>	<b>262,600</b>	<b>262,600</b>	<b>1,458,000</b>

The BIL authorizes and appropriates complementary funding for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service’s wildland fire management totaling \$3,010,400,000. The two agencies are collaborating on the BIL.

### Summary of BIL Funding and Purposes

Following is a summary of the appropriations provided in the BIL and the authorized purposes identified in Division D, Section 40803, of the law:

- Workforce: The BIL provides DOI \$120.0 million over five years to increase the compensation of Federal and Tribal wildland firefighters, convert more firefighters to permanent employment, and support the health and safety of firefighters. The law directs DOI and USDA to increase compensation for Federal firefighters in some geographic areas and work with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to establish a wildland firefighter occupational series. Further, DOI and USDA Forest Service are required to establish mitigation strategies for line-of-duty environmental hazards and firefighters’ mental health. The BIL also provides DOI \$50.0 million over five years to support pre-planning fire response workshops and training for firefighting and fuels management.
- Preparedness – Information Technology and Equipment: The BIL provides DOI \$75.0 million over five years for other activities that will increase America’s preparedness to respond to wildland fire. These provisions support satellite detection and reporting, wildfire

detection and monitoring, radio interoperability, and a pilot program to provide financial assistance to local and Tribal governments to purchase slip-on tanker units.

- Fuels Management: The BIL provides DOI \$878.0 million over five years to plan and implement fuels management. This work will protect vulnerable communities from wildfire while preparing natural landscapes for a changing climate. The law's funding is intended to support mechanical thinning; prescribed fire; employing contractors, young adults, veterans, and Tribal Nations' youth; and other fuels management.
- Burned Area Rehabilitation: The BIL provides DOI \$325.0 million over five years to complete post-fire restoration activities. These actions help mitigate the damaging effects of wildfires and set landscapes on a path toward natural recovery and climate resilience.
- Joint Fire Science Program: The BIL provides DOI \$10.0 million over five years to fund wildland fire research through the Joint Fire Science Program, which DOI and USDA jointly administer. The program will use the funding to make investments in research on climate change interactions, smoke management concerns, wildfire risk, impacts on diverse populations, and management actions that will make ecosystems more resilient to wildfires and drought.
- Funding for the Office of the Inspector General and Administration: The BIL requires that 0.5 percent of the appropriations be transferred to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and provides that DOI may use up to 3.0 percent of the appropriations for "salaries, expenses, and administration." DOI provided guidance about interpreting this section of the BIL. These amounts are displayed in Table 1, above.

## **BIL Requirements and Deadlines**

The BIL establishes several deadlines that will serve as milestones. Following is a list of those major deadlines:

- Beginning October 1, 2021 (BIL establishes no deadline for completion): DOI and USDA Forest Service will:
  - Seek to convert not fewer than 1,000 seasonal wildland firefighting positions to permanent year-round positions that are full-time and reduce hazardous fuels on Federal and Tribal land not fewer than 800 hours per year (each position); and
  - Increase the salary of wildland firefighters by an amount equal to the lesser of \$20,000 or 50 percent of base salary if the DOI and USDA Secretaries and the OPM

Director determine that a position is in a geographic area where it is difficult to recruit or retain Federal wildland firefighters.

- Mid-December 2021: DOI, USDA, and the Department of Homeland Security (through the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]) jointly established a Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission to (1) study and make recommendations on preventing, mitigating, suppressing, and managing wildland fires, and (2) rehabilitate land devastated by wildfires. The Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the FEMA Administrator are co-chairs of the Commission. Other members will be appointed. The Commission will issue a report within one year of its first meeting.
- February 14, 2022: DOI transmitted to Congress the initial spend plan for the BIL's WFM funding (see the section on "Budget" for more information).
- March 14, 2022 (120 days post-enactment): DOI and USDA Forest Service will each establish a five-year monitoring, maintenance, and treatment plan for fuels management (see the section on "Initial Coordination" for more information).
- May 13, 2022 (180 days post-enactment): DOI and USDA Forest Service shall coordinate with OPM on the development of a distinct wildland firefighter job series.
- May 13, 2022 (180 days post-enactment): USDA Forest Service and DOI (through Forest Service funding) will jointly develop and publish a map depicting at-risk communities (as defined in section 101 of the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (16 U.S.C. 6511)), including Tribal at-risk communities (to be updated every five years thereafter).
- Annually December 31, 2022-2026 (BIL does not state a specific date): DOI and USDA Forest Service will submit a report to Congress on the number of acres of land on which projects carried out using the BIL's treatment funds improved the Fire Regime Condition Class of the land (see the "Initial Coordination" section for more information).
- October 1, 2022: DOI and USDA Forest Service will develop and adhere to recommendations (1) for mitigation strategies for wildland firefighters to minimize exposure to line-of-duty environmental hazards; and (2) to recognize and address mental health needs, including post-traumatic stress disorder care.
- November 15, 2026 (five years post-enactment): DOI and USDA Forest Service will publish a long-term, outcome-based monitoring, maintenance, and treatment strategy.

- September 30, 2027: By no later than this date, DOI and USDA will conduct restoration treatments and improve the Fire Regime Condition Class of 10,000,000 acres of Federal or Tribal lands identified as having a very high wildfire risk potential and that are located in the wildland-urban interface or a public drinking water source area.

**Budget**: For FY 2022, the BIL provides a total of \$407.6 million for DOI WFM. These funds are for preparedness, fuels management, burned area rehabilitation, and the Joint Fire Science Program (see Table 1, above). The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has not apportioned the BIL funding yet. While awaiting the apportionment of FY 2022 funding, DOI is working to coordinate activities related to the BIL. After OMB apportions the funding for FY 2022, OWF will directly transfer to OIG 0.5 percent of the funding for each activity. OWF will consult with the WFM bureaus and offices about initial budget allocations of BIL funding.

### **Initial Coordination:**

To facilitate coordination, the WFM program is identifying points of contact within the bureaus and offices regarding the BIL's provisions. These points of contact will develop recommendations for coordinating BIL planning that will be provided to the Interior Fire Executive Council (IFEC).

Points of Contact (POC): Ongoing, using the template and current list in *Attachment A*, BIA, BLM, NPS, FWS, and OWF prepared this list of points of contact for BIL's provisions. They will update it on an ongoing basis, as necessary. Please submit updates to Cynthia Moses-Nedd ([cynthia\\_moses-nedd@ios.doi.gov](mailto:cynthia_moses-nedd@ios.doi.gov)) and Tamika Wheeler ([tamika\\_wheeler@ios.doi.gov](mailto:tamika_wheeler@ios.doi.gov)).

### **Workforce**

For the BIL's Workforce provisions:

- **Firefighters' Compensation, Benefits, and Classification** – DOI is participating in interagency work groups with OPM and USDA and USDA Forest Service to review the current classification series of wildland fire personnel. These groups include OWF and DOI's WFM bureaus. In addition to position classification and job series, these groups are also compensation and benefits.
- **Workforce Strategy** – Through DOI's Federal Consulting Group (FCG), DOI enlisted a contractor to conduct interviews of OWF and WFM bureau staff to assess the DOI WFM workforce. The FCG will provide the workforce assessment by May 31, 2022. In the meantime, the Workforce Strategy POCs will review and consider the submissions of OWF and the WFM bureaus regarding near-term FY 2022 workforce, administrative, and program support needs and plans (see "Workforce Strategy," below).

- **Firefighters’ Health and Safety** – Kaili McCray ([larry\\_mccray@ios.doi.gov](mailto:larry_mccray@ios.doi.gov)), OWF, and POCs identified by each WFM bureau are developing recommendations for IFEC on the health and safety provisions of the BIL (see “Health and Safety,” below).
- **Firefighters’ Training & Development** – The National Fire Training Officers and the National Wildfire Coordinating Group (NWCG) Program Office are working on investment strategies for efficiency and effectiveness of professional development and technical qualifications. They will develop recommendations for IFEC on the BIL’s training and development provisions (see “Training & Development,” below).

Workforce Strategy: By March 11, 2022, using the template in *Attachment B*, BIA, BLM, NPS, FWS, and OWF each will submit a preliminary plan to address hiring, administrative, and program support needs to support achievement of the BIL’s provisions. This preliminary plan will include primary and secondary “covered” positions (for preparedness, fuels management, burned area rehabilitation) and support positions such as human resources, contracting, and information technology staff. This preliminary plan will focus on near-term, FY 2022 workforce needs and plans. The information will be submitted to Jason Fallon ([jason\\_fallon@ios.doi.gov](mailto:jason_fallon@ios.doi.gov)) and Stephen Elmore ([stephen\\_elmore@ios.doi.gov](mailto:stephen_elmore@ios.doi.gov)), OWF, who will compile the information for consideration by the Workforce Strategy POCs and IFEC.

Health and Safety: By March 25, 2022, OWF and WFM bureau POCs will develop initial draft recommendations to IFEC for the BIL provisions requiring: (1) mitigation strategies for wildland firefighters to minimize exposure to line-of-duty environmental hazards; and (2) programs to recognize and address mental health needs for wildland firefighters, including post-traumatic stress disorder care. The recommendations will address present and proposed funding.

Training and Development: By March 25, 2022, the National Fire Training Officers, NWCG Program Manager will propose for consideration by IFEC initial draft investment strategies, plans, and cost estimates for training and workforce development. The Training Officers will outline strategies and plans for a comprehensive training and workforce development program establishing necessary competencies for WFM personnel at all levels of their career development. NWCG Program Office will develop a proposed initial investment strategy, plan, and estimates for conducting complete position analyses of the 125 NWCG WFM positions to determine which skills need training and which can be obtained from on-the-job training in the field. Coordination will occur between the two strategies to ensure alignment and not duplication.

## Preparedness – Information Technology and Equipment

For the BIL Information Technology (IT) and Equipment provisions:

- **Satellite Detection and Reporting of Wildfires** – The BIL provides funding and authorizes DOI and USDA Forest Service to jointly undertake an agreement with the Department of Commerce’s National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to establish and operate a program that makes use of geospatial information to rapidly detect and report wildfire starts in geographic areas for which either DOI or USDA is financially responsible for wildland fire protection and prevention. DOI and USDA will determine whether an Interagency Agreement—or another tool—is the appropriate mechanism for carrying out this provision and, if so, which department will undertake the agreement. IFEC will be responsible for consulting with USDA and deciding which department will execute the agreement.
- **Radio Interoperability of Incident Management Teams** – The BIL provides funding and authorizes DOI to acquire technology for each Type 1 and Type 2 incident management team to maintain interoperability with respect to the radio frequencies used by any responding agency. DOI plans to consult with USDA and other partners. Within DOI, the Field Communications Improvement Committee and OWF and WFM bureau POCs are developing recommendations for consideration by IFEC (see due date below).
- **Wildfire Detection and Monitoring Equipment** – The BIL provides funding and authorizes DOI and USDA Forest Service to procure and place real-time wildfire detection and monitoring equipment such as sensors, cameras, and other equipment in areas at risk of wildfire or in areas undergoing post-fire rehabilitation. The Office of Wildland Fire IT (WFIT) and bureau POCs are developing recommendations for consideration by IFEC (see due date below).
- **Pilot Program for Slip-On Tanker Units** – The BIL provides funding and authorizes DOI to work with stakeholders to develop and implement a pilot program to provide local governments and Tribal Nations financial assistance to acquire slip-on tanker units to establish fleets of vehicles that can be quickly converted to be operated as fire engines. OWF and WFM bureau POCs are developing recommendations for consideration by IFEC (see due date below).

IT and Equipment: By March 25, 2022, the POCs responsible for the BIL’s IT and equipment provisions (see above) will develop and submit initial draft recommendations for IFEC, including initial proposed plans, investment strategies, and cost estimates. The plans will identify the lead department/bureau(s)/office(s), partners, and proposed investment mechanisms.

## Fuels Management

The WFM bureaus are doing the following by March 7, 2022:

1. Enter data reflective of the funding estimates provided in Tables 2 & 3 located in *Attachment C* in the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) for at least FYs 2022-2024. For planning, WFM bureaus and OWF will use the estimates provided in Table 2 and Table 3 in Attachment C. These levels are not final; they are for planning;
2. Provide to Kristy Swartz ([kristy\\_swartz@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kristy_swartz@ios.doi.gov)), OWF, a supplemental narrative using the template in *Attachment D*; and
3. Provide to Kristy Swartz ([kristy\\_swartz@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kristy_swartz@ios.doi.gov)), OWF, a “Fuels Management Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Program of Work Summary” using the template provided in *Attachment E*.

If a bureau needs more time to submit one or more of these items, they will let Kristy Swartz know. After reviewing the submissions, OWF will allocate FY 2022 BIL funding up to the level identified in Table 2.

## Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR)

By April 15, 2022, BIA, BLM, FWS, and NPS will each provide to Kristy Swartz ([kristy\\_swartz@ios.doi.gov](mailto:kristy_swartz@ios.doi.gov)), OWF, a narrative that describes initial strategies for burned area rehabilitation and opportunities for cross-boundary collaboration, within DOI, with USDA Forest Service, and with non-Federal partners including Tribes, to invest in infrastructure, plant materials, monitoring, and evaluation necessary to accelerate the pace of rehabilitation and enhance the effectiveness of the program.

By May 1, 2022, OWF will issue a policy memorandum that implements short-term policy changes in time for fire season that:

- Describes multi-year reporting and out-year funding levels to plan to;
- Clarifies existing policy and interpretations; and
- Formally issues FY 2022 BIL allocations.

By September 30, 2022, OWF will update the Departmental Manual Chapter 7 and work with the WFM bureaus to develop and finalize a handbook to support post-fire rehabilitation requirements.



## **Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP)**

By March 25, 2022, DOI's JFSP POCs will provide for IFEC's consideration a draft plan for awarding the \$3.0 million the BIL provides DOI for FY 2022, including how the JFSP research funded by the BIL will support the policy priorities of the BIL and the Administration.

### **Attachments:**

- A: List of Points of Contact for Each Bureau and Office by BIL Provision
- B: Assessment of Acute Workforce Staffing and Other Support Needs – Template
- C: Instructions to Update NFPORS – Fuels Management
- D: Supplemental Narrative on BIL Fuels Management – Template
- E: Fuels Management Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Program of Work Summary – Template