



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

DOI WILDLAND FIRE PROGRAM POLICY MEMORANDUM No. 2024-001

To: Director, Bureau of Land Management
Director, National Park Service
Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
Commissioner, Bureau of Reclamation
Director, U.S. Geological Survey

From: Jeffery Rupert, Director, Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: Guidance for Initial Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Allocations and Spend Plans for Fuels Management, Burned Area Rehabilitation, and Carryover Funding (Public Law 118-15, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act)

Due Date: Within 14 days of the approval date of this memorandum (for spend plans for carryover from FY 2023)
Within 30 days of the approval date of this memorandum (for Burned Area Rehabilitation spend plans for FY 2024)
November 15, 2023 (for the return of unobligated balances from FY 2020 or earlier)

Effective Date: Immediately on approval

Expiration Date: Remains in effect unless rescinded or modified.

Purpose: This Policy Memorandum (PM) provides information and direction regarding the initial budget allocations for Department of the Interior (DOI) Wildland Fire Management (WFM) programs and activities for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 from funding made available by [Public Law \(P.L.\) 118-15, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act](#). In addition, this PM provides direction for WFM bureaus and offices to submit updated spend plans for FY 2024 for Fuels Management and Burned Area Rehabilitation and spend plans for carryover funding from FY 2023. It also provides guidance on reporting grazing as a fuels management accomplishment. Finally, this PM provides direction to return any carryover balances of funding from FY 2020 or earlier for which there are not specific obligation plans by November 15, 2023.

Background: P.L. 118-15—enacted September 30, 2023—authorizes continuing appropriations for FY 2024 from October 1 through November 17, 2023. This Continuing Resolution (CR) includes language

that makes available as part of the daily base rate for Interior WFM during the CR period \$429.0 million appropriated as disaster relief emergency supplemental funding for FY 2023 (\$45.3 million for Preparedness and \$383.7 million for Suppression Operations). Without this provision, these amounts would not be available at the daily base rate during the CR. The CR amounts associated with this 2023 disaster relief funding are designated as emergency funding.

In addition, P.L. 118-15 stipulates that the CR funding is available for the federal wildland firefighter base salary increase (a.k.a., pay supplements) provided under section 40803(d)(4)(B) of Public Law 117-58 (a.k.a., the “Bipartisan Infrastructure Law,” or BIL). The CR funding may be apportioned up to the rate for operations necessary to continue to fund these pay supplements.

Coordination: The Office of Wildland Fire (OWF) consulted bureaus and offices participating in Interior’s WFM program in developing the allocations and directions covered by this PM.

Scope: This PM applies to budget allocations and execution for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), the National Park Service (NPS), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), OWF, and any other bureaus or offices that receive WFM funding through this PM.

Existing Policy Affected:

None

Authority: [Departmental Manual Part 620 Wildland Fire Management](#) and P.L. 118-15

Timeframe: This PM applies to the requirements of, and funding made available by, P.L. 118-15. This funding is for the period of October 1, 2023, through November 17, 2023 (the first CR for FY 2024). The period is 48 days, which is 13.11 percent of FY 2024 (which has 366 days).

Policy:

Budget Allocations: Bureaus and offices must follow the CR terms and provisions outlined in the September 30, 2023, memorandum from the Director of DOI’s Office of Budget, “Guidance for FY 2024 Funds Execution Under H.R. 5860, the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act” (see Attachment 1.0 and its attachments: 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3).

Under the terms of the CR, bureaus and offices must manage funding consistent with appropriations enacted for FY 2023 and may not assume enactment of funding levels requested in the President’s FY 2024 budget, in H.R. 4821 (which the House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations reported to the full House July 24, 2023), or in S. 2605 (which the Senate Committee on Appropriations reported to the full Senate July 27, 2023). Bureaus and offices should manage prudently during the CR period to maintain ongoing activities in a manner that does not “impinge on final funding prerogatives,” per direction in the POB memorandum.

WFM bureaus and offices should execute the amounts provided by the CR in a manner that maximizes budgetary flexibility, consistent with law and guidelines, for the period following the CR. Bureaus and offices should keep in mind that full-year appropriations for FY 2024 may be reductions from the

FY 2023 full-year enacted levels and that Congress may not provide the President's budget request funding levels for some or all WFM activities.

Allocation amounts for the first CR for FY 2024 are provided in Table 1 (see below). Funding provided by the CR is only available through November 17, 2023. Accordingly, all WFM bureaus and offices should closely monitor program expenditures under the CR and return any projected unallocated funds to OWF timely for potential re-allocation to other bureaus and offices for the implementation of high-priority work. If a bureau needs additional funding to accomplish high priority work, notify OWF so an additional allocation can be made from existing available resources.

OWF notifies bureaus of Treasury transaction numbers once transfers are completed. Bureaus and offices should obligate funding consistent with policy guidance, including the guidance provided below.

Budget Guidance: Please contact OWF if you anticipate priority needs through November 17, 2023, that cannot be met using the funds allocated in Table 1 and other available funding.

In addition to the requirements in the POB memo (Attachment 1.0) and its attachments (Attachments 1.1, 1.2, and 1.3 to this PM), the following budget guidance and direction applies:

- Pay Supplements for Wildland Firefighters: CR funding may be used for pay supplements for federal wildland firefighters (as authorized by BIL Section 40803(d)(4)) and for tribal wildland firefighters. However, **bureaus and offices should await further guidance from OWF before using the CR funding for wildland firefighter pay supplements. Continue using BIL funding for federal firefighter pay supplements until further notice.**
- Preparedness: During the CR, \$50,056,000 in new regular funding and \$5,944,000 in new disaster relief funding is available for Preparedness. OWF is allocating only regular funding at this time. The CR funding is in addition to funding carried over from FY 2023, including BIL funding authorized for specific preparedness purposes, that remains available for obligation.

Table 1
Approved Allocations of Funding from
Public Law 118-15
the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act
(the first Continuing Resolution of FY 2024)
(Dollars in thousands/ A)

Activity or Subactivity	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	OWF	WFM Parent Account	Total by Activity or Subactivity
Preparedness (Regular)	3,000	30,000	4,000	5,000	1,500	6,556	50,056
Preparedness (Disaster Relief)	0	0	0	0	0	5,944	5,944
Suppression Operations (Disaster Relief)	0	0	0	0	0	50,298	50,298
Fuels Management	3,000	10,000	4,000	3,000	150	12,232	32,382
Burned Area Rehabilitation	100	1,000	50	50	0	1,483	2,683
Joint Fire Science Program	0	100	0	0	0	490	590
Facilities Construction and Maintenance/ B	0	0	0	0	0	1,311	1,311
Total by Bureau or Account	6,100	41,100	8,050	8,050	1,650	78,314	143,264

A/ Allocations are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars for presentation in this table.

B/ No funding is being allocated for Facilities Construction and Maintenance. The CR funding for this subactivity is in the WFM Parent account.

- Suppression Operations: During the CR, \$50,298,000 in new disaster relief funding is available for Suppression Operations in the WFM account. Unlike prior fiscal years, due to the uncertainty of how the Suppression funding will be enacted in the full-year appropriations for FY 2024 (whether as disaster relief funding or regular funding or a mix), OWF is holding the CR funding in the WFM Parent account until bureaus need funding other than carryover balances. If your bureau or office requires more funding for Suppression than is available in carryover, please contact OWF.
- Emergency Stabilization and Severity: Emergency Stabilization (ES) and Severity authority levels are capped at ten percent of the ten-year rolling suppression expenditure average for Interior. See Table 2 (below).

Table 2
Funding Authority Limits for
Emergency Stabilization and Severity
pursuant to Public Law 118-15,
the Continuing Appropriations Act, 2024 and Other Extensions Act
(the first Continuing Resolution of FY 2024)

(Dollars in thousands/ A)

Purpose	BIA	BLM	FWS	NPS	WFM Parent Account	Total
Emergency Stabilization	15,629	29,872	3,627	4,215	0	53,343
Severity	5,913	18,317	3,450	4,320	21,343	53,343

A/ Allocations are rounded to the nearest thousand dollars for presentation in this table.

The distribution of ES authority is based on the rolling ten-year average percentage of acres burned by bureau nationally, excluding Alaska. The percentages for FY 2024 are as follows:

- BIA: 29.30 percent,
- BLM: 56.00 percent,
- FWS: 6.80 percent, and
- NPS: 7.90 percent.

Severity authority is capped at \$32 million, with the balance held in reserve in the WFM Parent account. The distribution of Severity authority is based on each bureau's base percentage split of the annual Preparedness appropriation. The percentages are as follows:

- BIA: 18.48 percent,
- BLM: 57.24 percent,
- FWS: 10.78 percent, and
- NPS: 13.50 percent.

Regardless of the source of funding, obligations count against these funding authority caps.

Recoveries of prior obligations do not increase the amount of obligation authority available in a given year. In the event that one or more bureau(s) anticipates that it will exceed its ES or Severity authority, OWF may coordinate and approve the redistribution of ES and/or Severity authority among bureaus, as warranted and following consultation with the WFM bureau/office directors. Any recommended increases to the ES or Severity caps are subject to approval by the Director, OWF, in collaboration with the WFM bureau directors.

- Fuels Management: During the CR, \$32,382,000 in new funding is available for Fuels Management. WFM bureaus should use the CR allocation, carryover funding, and BIL funding to implement projects identified in the latest version of their FY 2024 Fuels Management Spend Plan.
 - Under the CR, Fuels Management activities undertaken within the WFM program are considered ongoing activities, and they are not prohibited. WFM bureaus and offices should ensure adequate funding for staff and necessary program activities. Furthermore, they should leverage opportunities to use allocations to actively implement fuels treatments.

- **Within 14 days of the approval date of this PM**, bureaus and offices should complete a detailed Fuels Management carryover spend plan for regular and BIL appropriations.

BLM will use the National Fire Plan Operations and Reporting System (NFPORS) to:

- Validate that incomplete, prior year work planned and approved in NFPORS will carry over into the new fiscal year.
 - Flag all actions that were approved and have unspent funds but are no longer planned for implementation.
 - Remove approval dates for work that was substituted for another action that was completed.
- Identify new work approved for implementation using remaining carryover funds from cancelled, incomplete, or work that cost less than originally estimated using:
 - Planned Initiation Fiscal Year reflective of the Fiscal Year of carryover funds,
 - Bureau Approval Date, and
 - “DR311” in the Treatment/Activity Name for any Disaster Relief funded projects.

BIA, FWS, NPS, and OWF will use the data downloaded from NFPORS to:

- Validate that incomplete, FY 2023 work planned and approved in NFPORS will carry over into the new fiscal year.
 - Flag all actions that were approved and have unspent funds but are no longer planned for implementation.
 - Remove approval dates for work that was substituted for another action that was completed.

OWF will work with the bureaus to prepare identified carryover work from NFPORS for importation into the InFORM-Fuels and InFORM-Post-Fire Reporting System. Upon importation, offices and bureaus will have two weeks to review the imported data and to:

- Identify new work approved for implementation using remaining carryover funds from cancelled, incomplete, or work that cost less than originally estimated using:
 - Estimated Initiation Fiscal Year reflective of the Fiscal Year of carryover funds,
 - Estimated Completion Fiscal Year reflective of the Fiscal Year of the new estimated completion fiscal year,
 - The Funding Source value reflective of the carryover funds (i.e., Regular, BIL, or Disaster Relief), and
 - Bureau Approval Date.

Bureaus should provide a summary from their detailed NFPORS/InFORM-Fuels Carryover Spend Plan using the template in Attachment 2.

- Under [DOI Wildland Fire Program PM No. 2023-003](#), bureaus must report fuels

accomplishments within 30 days of the completion of a treatment or other activity.

- **Grazing:** To report grazing as a fuels management accomplishment, bureaus must identify measurable criteria that substantiates its use as a fuels management tool to their field staff. At a minimum, these criteria must include all the following:
 - Grazing is funded by the Fuels Management program (e.g., through a contract or agreement with the grazer).
 - Grazing is conducted for the purpose of meeting a fuels management objective.
 - Monitoring and mitigation measures are in place to understand effectiveness and mitigate invasive species, if necessary.
- **Burned Area Rehabilitation:** During the CR, \$2,683,000 in new funding is available for Burned Area Rehabilitation (BAR). WFM bureaus should use the CR allocation, carryover funding, and BIL funding for projects identified in the latest version of their FY 2024 BAR Spend Plan.
 - Under the CR, BAR activities undertaken within the WFM program are considered ongoing activities, and they are not prohibited. WFM bureaus should fund BAR projects identified in NFPORS.
 - **Within 14 days of the approval date of this PM,** bureaus should review their FY 2023 planned, incomplete work in NFPORS and update it as necessary to identify the BAR work they intend to carry over to reflect their spend plan for regular and BIL appropriations using:
 - Obligation Fiscal Year reflective of the Fiscal Year of carryover funds,
 - Bureau Approval Date, and
 - “DR321” in the Treatment/Activity Name for any Disaster Relief funded projects.

Bureaus should provide a summary from their detailed NFPORS Carryover Spend Plan using the template in Attachment 2.

- **Within 30 days of the approval date of this PM,** bureaus should submit to OWF the bureau prioritization criteria, as required by 620 DM 7, and complete a full-year BAR spend plan for regular appropriations in NFPORS. The FY 2024 BAR spend plan should be reflected through the FY 2024 Obligation Fiscal Year and Bureau Approval Date. Throughout the fiscal year, OWF will transfer each bureau’s allocation of BAR funding as BAR projects needing funding are identified, bureau-approved, and added to NFPORS.
- Under [DOI Wildland Fire Program PM No. 2023-004](#), bureaus must report tabular data on post-fire rehabilitation within 30 days of the completion of a treatment or other activity.
- **Joint Fire Science Program:** During the CR, \$590,000 in new funding is available for the Joint Fire Science Program (JFSP). Under the terms of the CR, JFSP should expend only the minimum amount of funding that is needed to continue operations.
- **Facilities Construction and Maintenance:** During the CR, \$1,311,000 in new funding is available for Facilities Construction and Maintenance. However, OWF is allocating no funding for facilities at this

time, and no minimum funding is necessary to continue operations. OWF will reserve this funding in the WFM Parent account for any high priority needs that may arise during the CR.

- Carryover: In addition to the carryover spend plans for Fuels Management and BAR, **within 14 days of the approval date of this PM**, bureaus and offices should submit to OWF updated carryover spend plans for other activities using the template in Attachment 3.

OWF will work with bureaus and offices to review all carryover balances of funding from FY 2020 or earlier. For those amounts that remain unobligated and for which a bureau or office does not have firm plans to obligate the funding for approved purposes, OWF requests that bureaus return those funds to the WFM Parent account by **November 15, 2023**. Returned funds will then be available for other, high priority program needs.

Carryover older than FY 2021 will have a final review in March 2024, and OWF will request that any of those unobligated balances that are not identified for a specific project be returned to the WFM Parent account no later than April 15, 2024.

Contacts: For more information, you may contact the following people regarding:

- Budget allocations: Stephen Elmore or Kimberly Salwasser
- Fuels Management: Kristy Swartz
- Burned Area Rehabilitation: Kristy Swartz
- Wildland firefighters' pay supplements: Joe Majewski

CC: Interior WFM Executives
Interior WFM Directors
Interior WFM Budget Staff