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September 17, 2008

Senator Robert C. Byrd, Chairman
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, S-131
Washington, DC 20510

Representative David R. Obey, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol, H-218
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Thad Cochran, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Committee
The Capitol, S-131
Washington, DC 20510

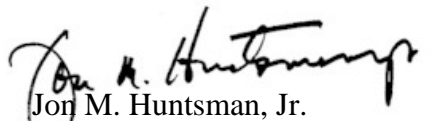
Representative Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. Capitol, H-218
Washington, DC 20515


Dear Chairmen Obey and Byrd, Representative Lewis, and Senator Cochran:

On behalf of Western Governors, we are writing to urge you to provide emergency supplemental appropriations sufficient to replenish the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and Department of the Interior (DOI) wildland fire operations costs that have been incurred in FY08 above appropriated amounts. In the absence of supplemental funding, the USFS has decided it would transfer \$400 million from non-fire accounts to support ongoing fire suppression efforts. We have consistently opposed this short-sighted policy. Continued implementation of fire transfers are detrimental to their operations, as well as disrupting or completely stopping important projects on public and private forests. These projects include hazardous fuels reduction efforts around communities, wildlife habitat, and prevention and research activities that minimize or prevent wildfires. We urge you to recognize the importance of continuing and increasing support for proactive community protection and forest health activities that prevent and reduce future wildfires.

We are very committed to working with Congress and the Administration to craft a long-term comprehensive solution, but in the meantime, supplemental funding is urgently needed. We respectfully urge Congress to please provide the needed supplemental funds to prevent further damage to proactive efforts to protect our communities and forest lands at risk from catastrophic wildfire. Thank you for your assistance with this critical funding.

Sincerely,


Jon M. Huntsman, Jr.
Lead Governor for Forest Health
WGA Chairman


Janet Napolitano
Lead Governor for Forest Health