

AMENDMENT NO.\_\_\_\_\_

Calendar No.\_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: In the nature of a substitute.

**IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES—119th Cong., 2d Sess.****S.91**

To improve Federal activities relating to wildfires, and for other purposes.

Referred to the Committee on \_\_\_\_\_ and ordered to be printed

Ordered to lie on the table and to be printed

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE intended to be proposed by \_\_\_\_\_

Viz:

1 Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Western Wildfire Support Act of 2026”.

6 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for  
7 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.

Sec. 2. Definitions.

**TITLE I—PREPARATION**

Sec. 101. Firefighting account transparency.

Sec. 102. Reimbursement for wildfires caused by military training.

Sec. 103. Strategic wildland fire management planning.

Sec. 104. Study and report on integrating local firefighters into wildfire response.

## TITLE II—WILDFIRE DETECTION AND SUPPRESSION SUPPORT

Sec. 201. Wildfire detection equipment.  
Sec. 202. Slip-on tanker units.  
Sec. 203. Research and development of unmanned aircraft system fire applications.  
Sec. 204. Study on drone incursions on wildfire suppression.  
Sec. 205. Study on modernizing wildfire response technologies.

## TITLE III—POST-FIRE RECOVERY SUPPORT

Sec. 301. Funding for online guides for post-disaster assistance.  
Sec. 302. Post-fire management and recovery.  
Sec. 303. Burned area rehabilitation.

1 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

2 In this Act:

3 (1) CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term  
4 “congressional committees” means—  
5 (A) the Committee on Energy and Natural  
6 Resources and the Committee on Appropriations  
7 of the Senate; and  
8 (B) the Committee on Natural Resources  
9 and the Committee on Appropriations of the  
10 House of Representatives.

11 (2) FEDERAL LAND.—The term “Federal land”  
12 means—

13 (A) land under the jurisdiction of the Secretary;  
14 (B) land held in trust by the United States  
15 for the benefit of an Indian Tribe or members  
16 of an Indian Tribe; and  
18 (C) National Forest System land.

15 (6) NATIONAL FOREST SYSTEM.—

22 (B) EXCLUSIONS.—The term “National  
23 Forest System” does not include—

24 (i) the national grasslands and land  
25 utilization projects administered under title

10 (8) SECRETARIES.—The term “Secretaries”  
11 means—

12 (A) the Secretary; and  
13 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture.

16 (10) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term  
17 “Secretary concerned” means—

## 1                   **TITLE I—PREPARATION**

### 2    **SEC. 101. FIREFIGHTING ACCOUNT TRANSPARENCY.**

3                   (a) ANNUAL REPORTING.—Section 104(a) of division  
4    O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (43  
5    U.S.C. 1748a–2(a)), is amended—

6                   (1) in the matter preceding paragraph (1), by  
7                   striking “the fiscal year” and all that follows  
8                   through “this division,” and inserting “each fiscal  
9                   year;”; and

10                  (2) in paragraph (1), by striking “report with  
11                  respect to the additional new budget authority;” and  
12                  inserting “report on the amounts obligated and the  
13                  amounts expended from Wildland Fire Management  
14                  accounts, including any amounts obligated or ex-  
15                  pended using additional new budget authority under  
16                  section 251(b)(2)(F) of the Balanced Budget and  
17                  Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985 (2 U.S.C.  
18                  901(b)(2)(F)), in the preceding fiscal year;”.

19                  (b) INCLUSIONS.—Section 104(b) of division O of the  
20    Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2018 (43 U.S.C. 1748a–  
21    2(b)), is amended—

22                  (1) in paragraph (3), in the matter preceding  
23                  subparagraph (A), by striking “a statistically signifi-  
24                  cant sample of large fires, including an analysis for  
25                  each fire” and inserting “each catastrophic wildfire

1       described in subsection (c), including an analysis for  
2       each such catastrophic wildfire”; and

3               (2) in paragraph (4), by striking “by fire size”  
4       and all that follows through the semicolon at the end  
5       and inserting the following: “by—

6                       “(A) the total ground-based operations  
7       costs;

8                       “(B) the total aircraft operations costs;

9                       “(C) the total personnel costs;

10                       “(D) the total on-incident and off-incident  
11       support costs;

12                       “(E) the total funding allocated from the  
13       Wildland Fire Management account of the Sec-  
14       retary of the Interior or the Secretary of Agri-  
15       culture (as applicable) to pay for administrative  
16       costs; and

17                       “(F) any other relevant factors, as deter-  
18       mined by the Secretary of the Interior or the  
19       Secretary of Agriculture (as applicable);”.

20       (c) CATASTROPHIC WILDFIRE DESCRIBED.—Section  
21       104 of division O of the Consolidated Appropriations Act,  
22       2018 (43 U.S.C. 1748a–2), is amended by adding at the  
23       end the following:

1       “(c) CATASTROPHIC WILDFIRE DESCRIBED.—A cat-  
2 astrophic wildfire referred to in subsection (b)(3) is a wild-  
3 fire incident or wildfire complex that—

4           “(1) requires the mobilization or use of Federal  
5 firefighting resources;

6           “(2) burns at least—

7              “(A) 100,000 acres of land; or

8              “(B) 50,000 acres of land, with a 50 per-  
9 cent or greater portion at high severity; and

10           “(3)(A) results in total suppression costs of  
11 \$50,000,000 or more;

12           “(B) destroys 1 or more primary residences; or

13           “(C) directly results in the death of 1 or more  
14 individuals.”.

15 **SEC. 102. REIMBURSEMENT FOR WILDFIRES CAUSED BY**  
16 **MILITARY TRAINING.**

17       (a) MUTUAL AID.—In accordance with section 2 of  
18 the Act of May 27, 1955 (42 U.S.C. 1856a) (commonly  
19 known as the “Reciprocal Fire Protection Act”), the Sec-  
20 retary of Defense shall seek to enter into reciprocal agree-  
21 ments with State agencies for mutual aid in furnishing  
22 fire suppression services.

23       (b) REIMBURSEMENTS.—Each reciprocal agreement  
24 entered into under subsection (a) shall provide for the re-  
25 imbursement of the State agency that is a party to the

1 agreement for fire suppression services provided by the  
2 State agency as a result of a fire caused by military train-  
3 ing or other planned actions carried out by the Depart-  
4 ment of Defense in support of military operations.

5 (c) LIMITATION.—Services reimbursable under sub-  
6 section (b) shall be limited to services directly attributable  
7 to the fire for which reimbursement is sought.

8 (d) APPLICATION.—Each application from a State  
9 agency for reimbursement for services under subsection  
10 (b) shall provide an itemized request of the services cov-  
11 ered by the application, including the costs of the services.

12 (e) FUNDS.—Reimbursements under subsection (b)  
13 shall be made from amounts authorized to be appropriated  
14 to the Department of Defense for operation and mainte-  
15 nance.

16 (f) EXISTING AGREEMENTS.—An agreement in effect  
17 as of the date of enactment of this Act shall be considered  
18 an agreement entered into under subsection (a) if the  
19 agreement otherwise meets the requirements of such an  
20 agreement under this section.

21 **SEC. 103. STRATEGIC WILDLAND FIRE MANAGEMENT PLAN-  
22 NING.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than September 30,  
24 2027, the Secretary concerned shall review existing spatial  
25 fire management policies for each fireshed on Federal land

1 and issue, as appropriate, new or revised policies that in-  
2 corporate the best available science and planning tools.

3 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—Spatial fire management poli-  
4 cies issued under subsection (a) shall—

5 (1) be routinely reviewed and updated as nec-  
6 essary to reflect changes in the fireshed as a result  
7 of forest or land management activities or wildfire  
8 incidents that have occurred within the applicable  
9 fireshed;

10 (2) identify potential wildfire and smoke risks  
11 to first responders, communities, critical infrastruc-  
12 ture, and high-value resources;

13 (3) be consistent with any resource manage-  
14 ment plan or forest plan developed for the applicable  
15 fireshed;

16 (4) in coordination with the local government,  
17 State, or Indian Tribe that includes that fireshed,  
18 delineate potential wildland fire operational delinea-  
19 tions that—

20 (A) identify potential wildfire control loca-  
21 tions; and

22 (B) specify the places in which risk to  
23 wildfire responders may be elevated as a result  
24 of—

13 (c) WILDFIRE CONSIDERATION DURING LAND MAN-  
14 AGEMENT PLANNING.—To the maximum extent prac-  
15 ticable, the Secretary concerned shall include in the devel-  
16 opment or revision of a resource management plan or for-  
17 est plan for Federal land containing 1 or more firesheds  
18 an employee that was involved in the development of the  
19 spatial fire management policies for that fireshed.

20 SEC. 104. STUDY AND REPORT ON INTEGRATING LOCAL  
21 FIREFIGHTERS INTO WILDFIRE RESPONSE.

22 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 1 year after the  
23 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Homeland  
24 Security, acting through the Administrator of the U.S.

1 Fire Administration and in coordination with the National  
2 Wildfire Coordinating Group, shall—

3 (1) conduct a study on the gaps in training for  
4 structural firefighters in high wildfire risk areas;  
5 and

6 (2) submit to the congressional committees, the  
7 Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental  
8 Affairs of the Senate, and the Committee on  
9 Science, Space, and Technology of the House of  
10 Representatives a report describing the results of the  
11 study conducted under paragraph (1).

12 (b) INCLUSIONS.—The report submitted under sub-  
13 section (a)(2) shall include—

14 (1) a summary of existing coordination prac-  
15 tices between Federal wildland firefighters and  
16 State, local, or Tribal firefighters;

17 (2) an analysis of the differences in best re-  
18 sponse practices for State, local, or Tribal fire-  
19 fighters when responding to a fire incident that  
20 threatens a single structure as compared to a wild-  
21 fire that threatens a community;

22 (3) existing training modules, or gaps in exist-  
23 ing training modules, available through the National  
24 Fire Academy to train State, local, or Tribal fire-

1       fighters on best response practices for a wildfire that  
2       threatens a community;

3               (4) an estimated cost and spending plan to ad-  
4       dress any gaps in existing training modules de-  
5       scribed in paragraph (3);

6               (5) an examination of the costs to State, local,  
7       and Tribal governments in integrating State, local,  
8       and Tribal firefighters in wildfire response; and

9               (6) an examination of ways the Federal Govern-  
10      ment may integrate State, local, and Tribal fire-  
11      fighters in wildfire response while minimizing the  
12      costs for State, local, and Tribal governments.

## 13 **TITLE II—WILDFIRE DETECTION 14 AND SUPPRESSION SUPPORT**

### 15 **SEC. 201. WILDFIRE DETECTION EQUIPMENT.**

16       To the extent practicable, the Secretary concerned  
17      shall—

18               (1) expedite the placement of wildfire detection  
19      equipment, such as sensors, cameras, and other rel-  
20      evant equipment, in areas at high risk of wildfire;

21               (2) expand the use of satellite data to improve  
22      wildfire detection and response;

23               (3) expedite any permitting required by the  
24      Secretary concerned for the installation, mainte-  
25      nance, or removal of wildfire detection equipment;

1 (4) use unmanned aerial vehicles to assess  
2 wildland fires in their incipient stages to determine  
3 the appropriate initial response actions; and

4 (5) review permitting described in paragraph  
5 (3) and procurement requirements for wildfire detec-  
6 tion equipment within the context of modern and in-  
7 novative technology.

## 8 SEC. 202. SLIP-ON TANKER UNITS.

14 (b) REPORTING REQUIREMENT.—

22 (A) the total number of slip-on tanker  
23 units purchased with financial assistance pro-  
24 vided by the Secretary under that section in the  
25 preceding year, by State;

1 (B) the number of requests received by the  
2 Secretary for financial assistance under that  
3 section to purchase slip-on tanker units in the  
4 preceding year; and

5 (C) any barriers identified by the Secretary  
6 to the ability of local governments and Indian  
7 Tribes to participate in the pilot program estab-  
8 lished under that section.

## 9 (2) TIMING.—

10 (A) INITIAL REPORT.—The Secretary shall  
11 submit the first report required under para-  
12 graph (1) not later than October 1, 2027.

13 (B) SUNSET.—The requirements of this  
14 subsection shall expire on October 1, 2029.

15 (c) INTEGRATION INTO WILDFIRE RESPONSE.—The  
16 Secretaries, in coordination with recipients of financial as-  
17 sistance for slip-on tanker units provided under section  
18 40803(c)(5) of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs  
19 Act (16 U.S.C. 6592(c)(5)), shall—

20 (1) as practicable, incorporate mobilized slip-on  
21 tanker units into resource tracking systems; and

22 (2) collaborate with the Administrator of the  
23 U.S. Fire Administration regarding any necessary  
24 training for operators of slip-on tanker units.

1 **SEC. 203. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF UNMANNED**2 **AIRCRAFT SYSTEM FIRE APPLICATIONS.**

3 (a) **DEFINITION OF UNMANNED AIRCRAFT SYS-**  
4 **TEM.**—In this section, the term “unmanned aircraft sys-  
5 tem” has the meaning given the term in section 44801  
6 of title 49, United States Code.

7 (b) **RESEARCH.**—The Secretaries shall, acting  
8 through the Joint Fire Science Program, work with uni-  
9 versities and other research institutions to carry out re-  
10 search and development on the wildfire response applica-  
11 tions of unmanned aircraft systems.

12 (c) **TESTING.**—The Secretaries may test an un-  
13 manned aircraft system developed under this section at  
14 an unmanned aircraft test range in accordance with sec-  
15 tion 44803 of title 49, United States Code, in coordination  
16 with the Administrator of the Federal Aviation Adminis-  
17 tration.

18 **SEC. 204. STUDY ON DRONE INCURSIONS ON WILDFIRE**  
19 **SUPPRESSION.**

20 (a) **DEFINITIONS.**—In this section, the terms “un-  
21 manned aircraft” and “unmanned aircraft system” have  
22 the meanings given those terms in section 44801 of title  
23 49, United States Code.

24 (b) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of Agri-  
25 culture, acting through the Chief of the Forest Service,  
26 in consultation with the Secretary and the Administrator

1 of the Federal Aviation Administration, shall conduct a  
2 study on the effects of unauthorized unmanned aircraft  
3 on wildfire suppression with respect to land managed by  
4 the Department of the Interior or the Department of Agri-  
5 culture.

6 (c) STUDY CONTENTS.—In conducting the study re-  
7 quired under subsection (b), the Secretary of Agriculture  
8 shall—

9 (1) determine, for each of the 5 most recent  
10 calendar years—

11 (A) the number of occurrences in which an  
12 unauthorized unmanned aircraft interfered with  
13 wildfire suppression; and

14 (B) the estimated effect of each occurrence  
15 described in subparagraph (A) on—

16 (i) the length of time required to  
17 achieve complete suppression;

18 (ii) any associated delay in the field-  
19 ing of aerial firefighting response units;  
20 and

21 (iii) the amounts expended by the  
22 Federal Government; and

23 (2) evaluate the feasibility, effectiveness, and  
24 safety impacts and results of various actions to pre-

1        vent unauthorized unmanned aircraft from interfering with wildfire suppression, including—

3                (A) the deployment of nonkinetic counter-UAS equipment;

5                (B) the seizure of an unmanned aircraft system, including through the use of kinetic counter-UAS equipment, such as a net; and

8                (C) the dissemination of educational materials relating to the effects of unauthorized unmanned aircraft on wildfire suppression.

11        (d) REPORT.—Not later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Agriculture shall submit to the congressional committees, the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate, and the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives a report describing—

17                (1) the findings of the study required under subsection (b); and

19                (2) any recommendations relating to those findings.

21 **SEC. 205. STUDY ON MODERNIZING WILDFIRE RESPONSE TECHNOLOGIES.**

23        (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries shall conduct a study on—

4 (A) an assessment of the quality and reli-  
5 ability of existing radio infrastructure;

6 (B) for any instance in which existing  
7 radio communications infrastructure has failed,  
8 an assessment of the impacts on forest manage-  
9 ment or wildfire response activities;

10 (C) a comparison of existing options to im-  
11 prove on-the-ground communications; and

12 (D) a cost analysis and estimated timeline  
13 to install the most feasible option identified  
14 under subparagraph (C);

15 (2) real-time or near-real-time situational  
16 awareness tools for operational firefighters, includ-  
17 ing—

18 (A) standards and requirements for such  
19 tools to ensure interoperability between Federal  
20 firefighting entities and applicable State, local,  
21 Tribal, or other partners;

(B) any requirements for additional remote sensing and mapping capabilities to fully leverage such situational awareness tools; and

1 (C) a cost comparison between commercially available systems and internally developed  
2 systems; and  
3

4 (3) wildland fire and smoke predictive modeling,  
5 including—

(A) an analysis of the data required to reduce predictive error for existing or developing models;

9 (B) an analysis of computing needs to  
10 more swiftly or accurately model wildland fire  
11 using existing or developing models;

12 (C) the feasibility of using artificial intel-  
13 ligence for wildland fire and smoke modeling;  
14 and

15 (D) existing or developing wildland fire  
16 predictive models that could assist with estab-  
17 lishing preferred conditions for igniting a pre-  
18 scribed fire and predicting smoke impacts.

19 (b) SUBMISSION AND PUBLIC AVAILABILITY.—Not  
20 later than 2 years after the date of enactment of this Act,  
21 the Secretaries shall submit to the congressional commit-  
22 tees and make publicly available the results of the study  
23 conducted under subsection (a).

## 1 **TITLE III—POST-FIRE RECOVERY 2 SUPPORT**

### 3 **SEC. 301. FUNDING FOR ONLINE GUIDES FOR POST-DIS- 4 ASTER ASSISTANCE.**

5 (a) USE OF SERVICES OF OTHER AGENCIES.—Sec-  
6 tion 201(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and  
7 Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131(a)) is amend-  
8 ed—

9 (1) in paragraph (7), by striking the period at  
10 the end and inserting “; and”; and

11 (2) by adding at the end the following:  
12 “(8) post-wildfire assistance.”.

13 (b) FUNDING FOR ONLINE GUIDES FOR ASSIST-  
14 ANCE.—Section 201 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster  
15 Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 5131)  
16 is amended by adding at the end the following:

17 “(e) FUNDING FOR ONLINE GUIDES FOR ASSIST-  
18 ANCE.—

19 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Administrator of the  
20 Federal Emergency Management Agency may enter  
21 into cooperative agreements to provide funding or  
22 technical assistance to a State agency designated or  
23 established under subsection (c) to establish, update,  
24 or operate a website to provide information relating  
25 to post-wildfire recovery funding and resources to a

1       community or an individual impacted by a cata-  
2       strophic wildfire.

3           “(2) MANAGEMENT.—A website established, up-  
4       dated, or operated under this subsection shall be—

5               “(A) managed by the State agency; and

6               “(B) suitable for the residents of the State  
7       of the State agency.

8           “(3) CONTENT.—The Administrator may pro-  
9       vide funding to a State agency under this subsection  
10      to establish, update, or operate a website that pro-  
11      vides 1 or more of the following:

12               “(A) A list of Federal, State, and local  
13       sources of post-wildfire recovery funding or as-  
14       sistance that may be available to a community  
15       after a catastrophic wildfire.

16               “(B) A list of Federal, State, and local  
17       sources of post-wildfire recovery funding or as-  
18       sistance that may be available to an individual  
19       impacted by a catastrophic wildfire.

20               “(C) A technical guide that lists and ex-  
21       plains the costs and benefits of alternatives  
22       available to a community to mitigate the im-  
23       pacts of a catastrophic wildfire and prepare for  
24       sequential hazards, such as flooding after a  
25       wildfire.

1                 “(4) COOPERATION.—A State agency that re-  
2 ceives funding or technical assistance to establish,  
3 update, or operate a website under this subsection  
4 shall cooperate with the Secretary of the Interior,  
5 the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Hous-  
6 ing and Urban Development, the Administrator of  
7 the Small Business Administration, and the Admin-  
8 istrator of the Federal Emergency Management  
9 Agency in establishing, updating, or operating the  
10 website under this subsection.

11                 “(5) UPDATES.—A State agency that receives  
12 funding to establish, update, or operate a website  
13 under this subsection shall update the website as  
14 necessary to ensure the content is accurate.”.

**15 SEC. 302. POST-FIRE MANAGEMENT AND RECOVERY.**

16                 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days after the  
17 date of enactment of this Act, the Secretary concerned  
18 shall, to the maximum extent practicable, establish 1 or  
19 more permanent Burned Area Emergency Response  
20 Teams (referred to in this section as a “BAER Team”)  
21 to coordinate immediate post-fire emergency response and  
22 stabilization efforts.

23                 (b) REQUIREMENTS.—A BAER Team shall—

24                         (1) survey the landscape affected by a wildfire  
25 to determine burn severity;



1           threats to human life and safety, property, and  
2           critical natural or cultural resources.

3           (c) DURATION.—A BAER Team—

4           (1) to the maximum extent practicable, shall co-  
5           ordinate post-fire emergency response and stabiliza-  
6           tion efforts for a period of not more than 1 year  
7           after the date of containment of a wildfire; and

8           (2) may monitor and maintain post-fire emer-  
9           gency response and stabilization efforts for a period  
10           of not more than 5 years after the date of contain-  
11           ment of a wildfire.

12 **SEC. 303. BURNED AREA REHABILITATION.**

13           (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF ACCOUNT.—There is estab-  
14           lished in the Treasury of the United States the Long-  
15           Term Burned Area Rehabilitation account under the  
16           Wildland Fire Management account for the Department  
17           of Agriculture, which shall be available to the Secretaries.

18           (b) PRESIDENTIAL BUDGET REQUESTS.—For fiscal  
19           year 2026 and each fiscal year thereafter, the Secretary  
20           concerned shall submit through the budget request of the  
21           President a request for amounts in the National Forest  
22           System appropriation account to carry out the activities  
23           described in subsection (c).

24           (c) AUTHORIZED ACTIVITIES.—The Secretary con-  
25           cerned shall carry out rehabilitation projects located at

1 sites impacted by a wildfire or post-wildfire flooding pri-  
2 marily on Federal land, but may include areas on non-  
3 Federal land (with the express consent of the landowner),  
4 that—

5 (1) restore the functions of an ecosystem, in-  
6 cluding—

7 (A) identifying areas where natural regen-  
8 eration is unlikely to occur;

9 (B) revegetation and reforestation, includ-  
10 ing coordinating any necessary site preparation,  
11 salvage harvesting, and replanting;

12 (C) watershed restoration;

13 (D) invasive species mitigation and re-  
14 moval; and

15 (E) wildlife habitat restoration; or

16 (2) repair or replace infrastructure or facilities  
17 critical for land management activities.

18 (d) DURATION OF ACTIVITIES.—A rehabilitation  
19 project under subsection (c) shall—

20 (1) begin not earlier than the date on which the  
21 wildfire was contained; and

22 (2) be completed, to the extent practicable, not  
23 later than 5 years after the date on which the wild-  
24 fire was contained.

25 (e) AGREEMENT AUTHORITY.—

10 (3) SAVINGS PROVISION.—Nothing in this sub-  
11 section—

16 (B) limits the effect of the prioritization  
17 requirements under subsection (f).

18 (f) PRIORITIZATION OF FUNDING.—The Secretary  
19 concerned shall prioritize, on a nationwide basis, projects  
20 for which funding requests are submitted under this sec-  
21 tion based on landscape and watershed benefits.