Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act of 2023
Section-By-Section Summary

Section 1. Short Title.
Section 1 establishes this bill as the "Wildland Firefighter Paycheck Protection Act of 2023."

Section 2. Special Base Rates of Pay for Wildland Firefighters.
Section 2 establishes a new pay scale for wildland firefighters at all grade levels. This pay scale will be applicable to Federal wildland firefighters who are in positions that are eligible for special firefighter retirement coverage (including wage grade employees).

The pay scale is 42 percent to 1.5 percent more than the General Schedule (GS) pay scale, under which many Federal employees are paid. This pay scale not only creates a new hourly pay rate and overtime pay rate for wildland firefighters, but it will also be used for their retirement calculations. Currently applicable pay premiums (like hazard pay and Sunday differential) would still apply.

Section 3. Wildland Fire Incident Response Premium Pay.
Section 3 requires the Forest Service and the Department of the Interior (DOI) to distribute daily pay supplements to its employees when they are working on long-duration wildfires, working on prescribed fires, or deployed away from their duty station to preposition in a high-fire risk area.

The daily pay supplement is determined by multiplying one hour of an employee's basic pay by 4.5. Payments are capped at approximately $160 per day and $9,000 per year.

Section 4. Rest and Recuperation Leave for Employees Engaged in Wildland Firefighting.
Section 4 requires the Forest Service and DOI to implement consistent standards for maximum lengths of deployments, maximum number of hours worked during a deployment, and minimum periods of rest between deployments.

Section 5. Transfer Authority.
Section 5 authorizes the Department of the Interior to use funds appropriated to the Forest Service, as needed, to ensure that no Federal wildland firefighter experiences a reduction in their pay rates prior to these provisions taking effect.