

119TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# S. 306

To establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 29, 2025

Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

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## A BILL

To establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

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

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the  
5 “Fire Ready Nation Act of 2025”.

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

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Establishment of fire weather services program.
- Sec. 4. Fire weather testbed.
- Sec. 5. Data management and technology modernization.
- Sec. 6. Surveys and assessments.
- Sec. 7. Incident Meteorologist Service.
- Sec. 8. Emergency response activities.
- Sec. 9. Submissions to Congress regarding the fire weather services program,  
 incident meteorologist workforce needs, and National Weather  
 Service workforce support.
- Sec. 10. Fire Science and Technology Working Group; strategic plan.
- Sec. 11. Fire weather rating system.
- Sec. 12. Government Accountability Office reports.
- Sec. 13. Cooperation and coordination.
- Sec. 14. General provisions.
- Sec. 15. Authorization of appropriations.

3 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-  
 6 tion” means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric  
 7 Administration.

8 (2) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-  
 9 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-  
 10 gress” means—

11 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,  
 12 and Transportation of the Senate; and

13 (B) the Committee on Science, Space, and  
 14 Technology of the House of Representatives.

15 (3) EARTH SYSTEM MODEL.—The term “Earth  
 16 system model” means a mathematical model con-  
 17 taining all relevant components of the Earth, namely

1 the atmosphere, oceans, land, cryosphere, and bio-  
2 sphere.

3 (4) FIRE ENVIRONMENT.—The term “fire envi-  
4 ronment” means—

5 (A) the environmental conditions, such as  
6 soil moisture, vegetation, topography, snowpack,  
7 atmospheric temperature, moisture, and wind,  
8 that influence—

9 (i) fuel and fire behavior; and  
10 (ii) the emission, chemical evolution,  
11 and transport of wildfire smoke; and

12 (B) the associated environmental impacts  
13 occurring during and after fire events.

14 (5) FIRE WEATHER.—The term “fire weather”  
15 means the weather conditions that influence the  
16 start, spread, character, or behavior of wildfires and  
17 relevant meteorological and chemical phenomena, in-  
18 cluding air quality, wildfire smoke, and meteorolog-  
19 ical parameters such as relative humidity, air tem-  
20 perature, wind speed and direction, and atmospheric  
21 composition and chemistry, including emissions and  
22 mixing heights.

23 (6) IMPACT-BASED DECISION SUPPORT SERV-  
24 ICES.—The term “impact-based decision support  
25 services” means scientific advice and interpretative

1 services the Administration provides to help core  
2 partners, such as emergency personnel and public  
3 safety officials, make decisions when the information  
4 impacts the lives and livelihoods of the people of the  
5 United States.

6 (7) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe”  
7 has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the  
8 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance  
9 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

10 (8) NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.—The  
11 term “Native Hawaiian organization” has the mean-  
12 ing given that term in section 6207 of the Elemen-  
13 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20  
14 U.S.C. 7517), including the Department of Hawai-  
15 ian Home Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

16 (9) SEASONAL.—The term “seasonal” has the  
17 meaning given that term in section 2 of the Weather  
18 Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017  
19 (15 U.S.C. 8501).

20 (10) STATE.—The term “State” means a State,  
21 the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of  
22 Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Common-  
23 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the United  
24 State Virgin Islands, the Federated States of Micro-

1       nesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the  
2       Republic of Palau.

3           (11) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term “Trib-  
4       al organization” has the meaning given that term in  
5       section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-  
6       cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

7           (12) UNDER SECRETARY.—The term “Under  
8       Secretary” means the Under Secretary of Commerce  
9       for Oceans and Atmosphere.

10   **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRE WEATHER SERVICES**  
11           **PROGRAM.**

12       (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall estab-  
13       lish and maintain a coordinated fire weather services pro-  
14       gram among the offices of the Administration in existence  
15       as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

16       (b) PROGRAM FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the  
17       program established under subsection (a), consistent with  
18       the priorities described in section 101 of the Weather Re-  
19       search and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C.  
20       8511), shall be—

21           (1) to support readiness, responsiveness, under-  
22       standing, and resilience of the United States to  
23       wildfires, fire weather, wildfire smoke, post-fire  
24       flooding and debris flows, and associated hazards  
25       and impacts in built and natural environments;

1           (2) to collaboratively develop and disseminate  
2       accurate, precise, effective, and timely risk commu-  
3       nications, forecasts, watches, and warnings relating  
4       to wildfires, fire weather, wildfire smoke, post-fire  
5       flooding and debris flows, and other associated con-  
6       ditions, hazards, and impacts, as applicable, with  
7       Federal land management agencies;

8           (3) to partner with and support the public,  
9       Federal and State government entities, Indian  
10      tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and academic  
11      and local partners through the development of capa-  
12      bilities, impact-based decision support services, and  
13      overall service delivery and utility related to fire  
14      weather;

15          (4) to conduct and support research and devel-  
16      opment of new and innovative models, technologies,  
17      techniques, products, systems, processes, and proce-  
18      dures to predict and improve understanding of  
19      wildfires, fire weather, related air quality, post-fire  
20      flooding and debris flows, and the fire environment;

21          (5) to develop processes to transition research  
22      into operational use and inform additional areas of  
23      research to deliver fire weather products, services,  
24      and decision support tools to operational users and  
25      platforms;

1           (6) to develop communications networks and  
 2           strategies to ensure parity of fire forecasts, warning  
 3           services, and information about current fire location,  
 4           for remote, isolated, and rural communities, includ-  
 5           ing communities where the public acts as the first  
 6           responder to wildfire; and

7           (7) to develop, in coordination with Federal  
 8           land management agencies, impact-based decision  
 9           support services that operationalize and integrate  
 10          the functions described in paragraphs (1) through  
 11          (6) in order to provide comprehensive impact-based  
 12          decision support services that encompass the fire en-  
 13          vironment.

14          (c) PROGRAM PRIORITIES.—In developing and imple-  
 15          menting the program established under subsection (a), the  
 16          Under Secretary shall prioritize—

17               (1) development of a fire weather-enabled Earth  
 18               system model and data assimilation systems that—

19                       (A) are capable of prediction and fore-  
 20                       casting across relevant spatial and temporal  
 21                       scales;

22                       (B) include variables associated with fire  
 23                       weather and the fire environment;

1 (C) improve understanding of the connec-  
 2 tions between fire weather and modes of climate  
 3 variability;

4 (D) incorporate emerging techniques such  
 5 as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and  
 6 cloud computing; and

7 (E) use a rapidly deployable network of  
 8 rain gauges for post-fire hazard monitoring;

9 (2) advancement of existing and new observa-  
 10 tional capabilities, including satellite-, airborne-, air-  
 11 , and ground-based systems and technologies, and  
 12 social networking and other public information-gath-  
 13 ering applications that—

14 (A) identify—

15 (i) high-risk pre-ignition conditions;

16 (ii) conditions that influence fire be-  
 17 havior and spread including those condi-  
 18 tions that suppress active fire events; and

19 (iii) fire weather threat levels;

20 (B) support real-time notification and  
 21 monitoring of ignitions;

22 (C) support observations and data collec-  
 23 tion of fire weather and fire environment vari-  
 24 ables, including vegetation state and profiles of  
 25 wildfire smoke, winds, temperature, and humid-



1           ity, for development of the model and systems  
2           under paragraph (1); and

3           (D) support forecasts and research that  
4           mitigate the impacts of wildfires on human life,  
5           health, and the economy;

6           (3) development and implementation of ad-  
7           vanced and user-oriented impact-based decision  
8           tools, science, and technologies that—

9           (A) ensure real-time and retrospective  
10          data, products, and services are findable, acces-  
11          sible, interoperable, usable, inform further re-  
12          search, and are analysis- and decision-ready;

13          (B) provide targeted information through-  
14          out the fire lifecycle including pre-ignition, de-  
15          tection, forecasting, post-fire, and monitoring  
16          phases; and

17          (C) support early assessment of post-fire  
18          hazards, such as air quality, debris flows,  
19          mudslides, and flooding; and

20          (4) ensuring the parity of access to and support  
21          from the tools, science, and technologies developed  
22          under this subsection for remote, isolated, and rural  
23          communities.

1 (d) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—In developing and imple-  
2 menting the program established under subsection (a), the  
3 Under Secretary may—

4 (1) conduct relevant physical and social science  
5 research activities in support of the functions de-  
6 scribed in subsection (b) and the priorities described  
7 in subsection (c);

8 (2) conduct relevant activities, in coordination  
9 with Federal land management agencies and Federal  
10 science agencies, to assess fuel characteristics, in-  
11 cluding moisture, loading, and other parameters  
12 used to determine fire risk levels and outlooks;

13 (3) support and conduct research that assesses  
14 impacts to marine, riverine, watershed, and other  
15 relevant ecosystems, which may include forest and  
16 rangeland ecosystems, resulting from activities asso-  
17 ciated with mitigation of and response to wildfires;

18 (4) support and conduct attribution science re-  
19 search relating to wildfires, fire weather, fire risk,  
20 wildfire smoke, and associated conditions, risks, and  
21 impacts;

22 (5) develop wildfire smoke and air quality fore-  
23 casts, forecast guidance, and prescribed burn weath-  
24 er forecasts, and conduct research on the impact of

1 such forecasts on response behavior that minimizes  
2 health-related impacts from wildfire smoke exposure;

3 (6) use, in coordination with Federal land man-  
4 agement agencies, wildland fuels information and  
5 fire resource intelligence to inform fire environment  
6 impact-based decision support services and products  
7 for safety;

8 (7) work with Federal agencies to provide data,  
9 tools, and services to support the implementation of  
10 mitigation measures by such agencies;

11 (8) provide training and support to ensure ef-  
12 fective media utilization of impact-based decision  
13 support services and products to the public regard-  
14 ing actions needing to be taken;

15 (9) provide comprehensive training to ensure  
16 staff of the program established under subsection  
17 (a) is properly equipped to deliver the impact-based  
18 decision support services and products described in  
19 paragraphs (1) through (6); and

20 (10) acquire, through contracted purchase, pri-  
21 vate sector-produced observational data to fill identi-  
22 fied gaps, as needed.

23 (e) PARITY FOR REMOTE, ISOLATED, AND RURAL  
24 COMMUNITIES.—In developing and implementing the pro-  
25 gram established under subsection (a), the Under Sec-

1   retary shall ensure parity of coverage and programmatic  
 2   activity for remote, isolated, and rural communities, in-  
 3   cluding communities where the public acts as the first re-  
 4   sponder to wildfire.

5       (f) COLLABORATION.—The Under Secretary shall, as  
 6   the Under Secretary considers appropriate, collaborate  
 7   with partners in the weather and climate enterprises, aca-  
 8   demic institutions, States, Indian tribes, Tribal organiza-  
 9   tions, Native Hawaiian organizations, local partners, and  
 10   Federal agencies in the development and implementation  
 11   of the program established under subsection (a).

12       (g) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out the activities  
 13   under this Act and the amendments made by this Act,  
 14   the Under Secretary may provide support to non-Federal  
 15   entities by making funds and resources available  
 16   through—

17           (1) competitive grants;

18           (2) contracts under the mobility program under  
 19       subchapter VI of chapter 33 of title 5, United States  
 20       Code (commonly referred to as the “Intergovern-  
 21       mental Personnel Act Mobility Program”);

22           (3) cooperative agreements; and

23           (4) co-location agreements as described in sec-  
 24       tion 502 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

1 Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amend-  
 2 ments Act of 2020 (33 U.S.C. 851 note prec.).

3 (h) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION PLAN.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days  
 5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
 6 Under Secretary shall submit to the appropriate  
 7 committees of Congress a plan that details how the  
 8 program established under subsection (a) will be ad-  
 9 ministered and governed within the Administration.

10 (2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by para-  
 11 graph (1) should include a description of—

12 (A) how the functions described in sub-  
 13 section (b), the priorities described in sub-  
 14 section (c), and the activities described in sub-  
 15 section (d) will be distributed among the line of-  
 16 fices of the Administration; and

17 (B) the mechanisms in place to ensure  
 18 seamless coordination among those offices.

19 **SEC. 4. FIRE WEATHER TESTBED.**

20 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRE WEATHER  
 21 TESTBED.—The Under Secretary shall establish a fire  
 22 weather testbed that enables engagement across the Fed-  
 23 eral Government, State and local governments, academia,  
 24 private and federally funded research laboratories, the pri-  
 25 vate sector, and end-users in order to evaluate the accu-

1 racy and usability of technology, models, fire weather  
2 products and services, and other research to accelerate the  
3 implementation, transition to operations, and use of new  
4 capabilities by the Administration, Federal and land man-  
5 agement agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

6 (b) UNCREWED SYSTEMS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall—

8 (A) establish and carry out a research and  
9 development program to support the application  
10 of uncrewed systems technologies to improve  
11 data collection in support of modeling, observa-  
12 tions, predictions, forecasts, and impact-based  
13 decision support services, and for other pur-  
14 poses of the Administration;

15 (B) transition uncrewed systems tech-  
16 nologies from research to operations as the  
17 Under Secretary considers appropriate; and

18 (C) coordinate with other Federal agencies  
19 that may be developing uncrewed systems and  
20 related technologies to meet the challenges of  
21 wildland fire management.

22 (2) PILOTS REQUIRED.—In carrying out para-  
23 graph (1), the Under Secretary shall conduct pilots  
24 of uncrewed systems for fire weather and fire envi-  
25 ronment observations, including—

1 (A) testing of uncrewed systems in ap-  
2 proximations of real-world scenarios;

3 (B) assessment of the utility of meteoro-  
4 logical data collected from fire response and as-  
5 sessment aircraft;

6 (C) input of the collected data into appro-  
7 priate models to predict fire behavior, including  
8 coupled atmosphere and fire models; and

9 (D) collection of best management prac-  
10 tices for deployment of uncrewed systems and  
11 other remote data technology, including for  
12 communication and coordination between the  
13 stakeholders described in subsection (a).

14 (3) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out activi-  
16 ties under this subsection, the Under Secretary  
17 shall ensure that any testing or deployment of  
18 uncrewed systems follow procedures, restric-  
19 tions, and protocols established by the heads of  
20 the Federal agencies with statutory or regu-  
21 latory jurisdiction over any airspace in which  
22 wildfire response activities are conducted during  
23 an active wildfire event.

24 (B) CONSULTATION AND COORDINA-  
25 TION.—The Under Secretary shall consult and

1 coordinate with relevant Federal land manage-  
 2 ment agencies, Federal science agencies, and  
 3 the Federal Aviation Administration to develop  
 4 processes for the appropriate deployment of the  
 5 systems described in subparagraph (A).

6 (c) ADDITIONAL PILOT PROJECTS.—The Under Sec-  
 7 retary shall establish additional pilot projects relating to  
 8 the fire weather testbed that may include the following ele-  
 9 ments:

10 (1) Advanced products to detect fire from sat-  
 11 ellites.

12 (2) Procurement and use of commercial data.

13 (3) Investigation and evaluation of information  
 14 needs of users and decision makers.

15 (d) REPORT.—Section 108(a)(5) of the National Oce-  
 16 anic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act  
 17 of 1992 (15 U.S.C. 8520(a)(5)) is amended—

18 (1) in subparagraph (C), by adding “and” at  
 19 the end; and

20 (2) in subparagraph (D)—

21 (A) in clause (ii), by striking “and”;

22 (B) in clause (iii), by adding “and” at the  
 23 end; and

24 (C) by adding at the end the following:



1 “(iv) a description of the research  
 2 that has been transitioned into operations,  
 3 including research at the fire weather  
 4 testbed established under section 4(a) of  
 5 the Fire Ready Nation Act of 2025;”.

6 **SEC. 5. DATA MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY MOD-**  
 7 **ERNIZATION.**

8 (a) DATA AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT.—Sec-  
 9 tion 301 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Inno-  
 10 vation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8531) is amended—

11 (1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as  
 12 subsections (g) and (h), respectively; and

13 (2) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-  
 14 lowing:

15 “(f) DATA AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary  
 17 shall—

18 “(A) make data and metadata generated  
 19 or collected by the National Oceanic and At-  
 20 mospheric Administration that the Under Sec-  
 21 retary has the legal right to redistribute fully  
 22 and openly available, in accordance with chap-  
 23 ter 35 of title 44, United States Code, and the  
 24 Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking  
 25 Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–435; 132 Stat.

1           5529) and the amendments made by that Act,  
2           and preserve and curate such data and  
3           metadata, in accordance with chapter 31 of title  
4           44, United States Code (commonly known as  
5           the ‘Federal Records Act of 1950’), in order to  
6           maximize use of such data and metadata; and

7           “(B) manage and steward the access, ar-  
8           chival, and retrieval activities for the data and  
9           metadata described in subparagraph (A) by—

10           “(i) using—

11                   “(I) enterprise-wide infrastruc-  
12                   ture, emerging technologies, commer-  
13                   cial partnerships, and the skilled  
14                   workforce needed to provide appro-  
15                   priate data management from collec-  
16                   tion to broad access; and

17                   “(II) associated information serv-  
18                   ices; and

19           “(ii) pursuing the maximum inter-  
20           operability of data and information by—

21                   “(I) leveraging data, information,  
22                   knowledge, and tools from across the  
23                   Federal Government to support equi-  
24                   table access, cross-sectoral collabora-

1                   tion and innovation, and local plan-  
2                   ning and decision-making; and

3                   “(II) developing standards and  
4                   practices for the adoption and citation  
5                   of digital object identifiers for  
6                   datasets, models, and analytical tools.

7                   “(2) COLLABORATION.—In carrying out this  
8                   subsection, the Under Secretary shall collaborate  
9                   with such Federal partners and stakeholders as the  
10                  Under Secretary considers relevant—

11                  “(A) to develop standards to pursue max-  
12                  imum interoperability of data, information,  
13                  knowledge, and tools across the Federal Gov-  
14                  ernment, convert historical records into com-  
15                  mon digital formats, and improve access and  
16                  usability of data by partners and stakeholders;

17                  “(B) to identify and solicit relevant data  
18                  from Federal and international partners and  
19                  other relevant stakeholders, as the Under Sec-  
20                  retary considers appropriate; and

21                  “(C) to develop standards and practices for  
22                  the adoption and citation of digital object iden-  
23                  tifiers for datasets, models, and analytical  
24                  tools.”.

1 (b) WILDFIRE TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION.—Sec-  
 2 tion 1114 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Man-  
 3 agement, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 1748b–1) is  
 4 amended—

5 (1) in subsection (c)(3), by inserting “the Na-  
 6 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,”  
 7 after “Federal Aviation Administration,”;

8 (2) in subsection (e)(2)—

9 (A) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as  
 10 subparagraph (C); and

11 (B) by inserting after subparagraph (A)  
 12 the following:

13 “(B) CONSULTATION.—

14 “(i) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out  
 15 subparagraph (A), the Secretaries shall  
 16 consult with the Under Secretary of Com-  
 17 merce for Oceans and Atmosphere regard-  
 18 ing any development of impact-based deci-  
 19 sion support services that relate to wild-  
 20 fire-related activities of the National Oce-  
 21 anic and Atmospheric Administration.

22 “(ii) DEFINITION OF IMPACT-BASED  
 23 DECISION SUPPORT SERVICES.—In this  
 24 subparagraph, the term ‘impact-based deci-  
 25 sion support services’ means scientific ad-

vice and interpretative services the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration provides to help core partners, such as emergency personnel and public safety officials, make decisions when the information impacts the lives and livelihoods of the people of the United States.”; and

(3) in subsection (f)—

(A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively, and moving such subparagraphs, as so redesignated, 2 ems to the right;

(B) by striking “The Secretaries” and inserting the following:

“(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries”; and

(C) by adding at the end the following:

“(2) COLLABORATION.—In carrying out paragraph (1), the Secretaries shall collaborate with the Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere to improve coordination, utility of systems and assets, and interoperability of data for wildfire smoke prediction, forecasting, and modeling.”.

(c) DIGITAL PRESENCE.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall develop and maintain a comprehensive, centralized,

1 and publicly accessible digital presence designed to  
2 promote findability, accessibility, interoperability,  
3 usability, and utility of the services, tools, data, and  
4 information produced by the program established  
5 under section 3(a).

6 (2) DIGITAL PLATFORM AND TOOLS.—In car-  
7 rying out paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall  
8 seek to ensure the digital platform and tools of the  
9 Administration integrate geospatial data, decision  
10 support tools, training, and best practices to provide  
11 real-time fire weather forecasts and address fire-re-  
12 lated issues and needs.

13 (d) HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall  
15 seek to acquire sufficient high-performance com-  
16 puting resources and capacity for research, oper-  
17 ations, and data storage in support of the program  
18 established under section 3(a).

19 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In acquiring high-per-  
20 formance computing capacity under paragraph (1),  
21 the Under Secretary shall consider requirements  
22 needed for—

23 (A) conducting research, development, and  
24 testbed experiments;

- 1 (B) the transition of research and testbed
- 2 developments into operations;
- 3 (C) sustaining capabilities in operations;
- 4 (D) capabilities existing in other Federal
- 5 agencies and the commercial sector; and
- 6 (E) skilled workforce development.

7 **SEC. 6. SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS.**

- 8 (a) POST-FIRE WEATHER SURVEYS AND ASSESS-
- 9 MENTS .—

- 10 (1) ANNUAL POST-FIRE-WEATHER-SEASON SUR-
- 11 VEY AND ASSESSMENT.—

- 12 (A) IN GENERAL.—During the second win-
- 13 ter following the date of the enactment of this
- 14 Act, and each year thereafter, the Under Sec-
- 15 retary shall conduct a post-fire-weather-season
- 16 survey and assessment.

- 17 (B) ELEMENTS.—After conducting a post-
- 18 fire-weather-season survey and assessment
- 19 under subparagraph (A), the Under Secretary
- 20 shall—

- 21 (i) investigate any gaps in weather
- 22 data collected during the assessment;
- 23 (ii) identify and implement strategies
- 24 and procedures to improve program serv-
- 25 ices and information dissemination;

(iii) update systems, processes, strategies, and procedures to enhance the efficiency and reliability of weather data obtained from the assessment;

(iv) evaluate the accuracy and efficacy of physical fire weather forecasting information for each incident included in the survey and assessment; and

(v) assess and refine performance measures, as needed.

(2) SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS FOLLOWING INDIVIDUAL WILDFIRE EVENTS.—The Under Secretary may conduct surveys and assessments following individual wildfire events as the Under Secretary determines necessary.

(3) GOAL.—In carrying out activities under this subsection, the Under Secretary shall seek to increase the number of post-wildfire community impact studies, including by surveying individual and collective responses and incorporating other applicable topics of social science research.

(4) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—Not less frequently than once each year, the Under Secretary shall join other relevant agencies to provide a briefing to the appropriate committees of Congress that provides—



- 1 (A) an overview of the fire season;
- 2 (B) an outlook for the fire season; and
- 3 (C) fire weather forecasts.

4 (5) COORDINATION.—In conducting any survey  
5 or assessment under this subsection, the Under Sec-  
6 retary shall coordinate with Federal, State, and local  
7 partners, Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organiza-  
8 tions, private entities, and such institutions of high-  
9 er education as the Under Secretary considers rel-  
10 evant in order to—

11 (A) improve operations and collaboration;  
12 and

13 (B) optimize data collection, sharing, inte-  
14 gration, assimilation, and dissemination.

15 (6) DATA AVAILABILITY.—The Under Secretary  
16 shall make the data and findings obtained from each  
17 assessment conducted under this subsection available  
18 to the public in an accessible digital format as soon  
19 as practicable after conducting the assessment.

20 (7) SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS.—The Under Sec-  
21 retary shall make best efforts to incorporate the re-  
22 sults and recommendations of each assessment con-  
23 ducted under this subsection into the research and  
24 development plan and operations of the Administra-  
25 tion.

1 (b) JOINT ASSESSMENT AND PLAN FOR AUTOMATED  
2 SURFACE OBSERVING SYSTEM.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in col-  
4 laboration with the Administrator of the Federal  
5 Aviation Administration and the Secretary of De-  
6 fense, shall—

7 (A) conduct an assessment of resources,  
8 personnel, procedures, and activities necessary  
9 to maximize the functionality and utility of the  
10 automated surface observing system of the  
11 United States that identifies—

12 (i) key system upgrades needed to im-  
13 prove observation quality and utility for  
14 weather forecasting, aviation safety, and  
15 other users;

16 (ii) improvements needed in observa-  
17 tions within the planetary boundary layer,  
18 including mixing height;

19 (iii) improvements needed in public  
20 accessibility of observational data;

21 (iv) improvements needed to reduce  
22 latency in reporting of observational data;

23 (v) relevant data to be collected for  
24 the production of forecasts or forecast  
25 guidance relating to atmospheric composi-

tion, including particulate and air quality data related to wildfires, and aviation safety;

(vi) areas of concern regarding operational continuity and reliability of the system, which may include needs for on-night staff, particularly in remote and rural areas and areas where system failure would have the greatest negative impact to the community;

(vii) stewardship, data handling, data distribution, and product generation needs arising from upgrading and changing the automated surface observation systems;

(viii) possible solutions for areas of concern identified under clause (vi), including with respect to the potential use of backup systems, power and communication system reliability, staffing needs and personnel location, and the acquisition of critical component backups and proper storage location to ensure rapid system repair necessary to ensure system operational continuity; and

1 (ix) research, development, and transi-  
2 tion to operations needed to develop ad-  
3 vanced data collection, quality control, and  
4 distribution so that the data are provided  
5 to models, users, and decision support sys-  
6 tems in a timely manner; and

7 (B) develop and implement a plan that ad-  
8 dresses the findings of the assessment con-  
9 ducted under subparagraph (A), including by  
10 seeking and allocating resources necessary to  
11 ensure that system upgrades are standardized  
12 across the Administration, the Federal Aviation  
13 Administration, and the Department of Defense  
14 to the extent practicable.

15 (2) STANDARDIZATION.—Any system standard-  
16 ization implemented under paragraph (1)(B) shall  
17 not impede activities to upgrade or improve indi-  
18 vidual units of the system.

19 (3) REMOTE AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATION  
20 COORDINATION.—The Under Secretary, in collabora-  
21 tion with relevant Federal agencies and the National  
22 Interagency Coordination Center, shall assess and  
23 develop cooperative agreements to improve coordina-  
24 tion, interoperability standards, operations, and  
25 placement of remote automatic weather stations for

1 the purpose of improving utility and coverage of re-  
 2 mote automatic weather stations, automated surface  
 3 observation systems, wildfire smoke monitoring plat-  
 4 forms, and other similar stations and systems for  
 5 weather and climate operations.

6 (4) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years  
 8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
 9 Under Secretary, in collaboration with the Ad-  
 10 ministrator of the Federal Aviation Administra-  
 11 tion and the Secretary of Defense, shall submit  
 12 to the appropriate committees of Congress a re-  
 13 port that—

14 (i) details the findings of the assess-  
 15 ment required by subparagraph (A) of  
 16 paragraph (1); and

17 (ii) the plan required by subparagraph  
 18 (B) of such paragraph.

19 (B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by  
 20 subparagraph (A) shall include a detailed as-  
 21 sessment of appropriations required—

22 (i) to address the findings of the as-  
 23 sessment required by subparagraph (A) of  
 24 paragraph (1); and

1 (ii) to implement the plan required by  
2 subparagraph (B) of such paragraph.

3 **SEC. 7. INCIDENT METEOROLOGIST SERVICE.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Under Secretary shall es-  
5 tablish and maintain an Incident Meteorologist Service  
6 within the National Weather Service (in this section re-  
7 ferred to as the “Service”).

8 (b) INCLUSION OF EXISTING INCIDENT METEOROLO-  
9 GISTS.—The Service shall include—

10 (1) the incident meteorologists of the Adminis-  
11 tration as of the date of the enactment of this Act;  
12 and

13 (2) such incident meteorologists of the Adminis-  
14 tration as may be appointed after such date.

15 (c) FUNCTIONS.—The Service shall provide—

16 (1) on-site impact-based decision support serv-  
17 ices to Federal, State, and local government emer-  
18 gency response agencies, Indian tribes, and Native  
19 Hawaiian organizations preceding, during, and fol-  
20 lowing significant weather-related events, such as  
21 wildland fires, that threaten human life, property, or  
22 the economy; and

23 (2) support to Federal, State, and local govern-  
24 ment decision makers, partners, and stakeholders,  
25 Indian tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Ha-

1       waiian organizations for seasonal planning and pre-  
2       fire mitigation activities.

3       (d) DEPLOYMENT.—The Service shall be deployed—

4               (1) as determined by the Under Secretary; or

5               (2) at the request of the head of another Fed-  
6       eral agency and with the approval of the Under Sec-  
7       retary.

8       (e) STAFFING AND RESOURCES.—In establishing and  
9       maintaining the Service, the Under Secretary shall iden-  
10      tify, acquire, and maintain adequate levels of staffing and  
11      resources to meet user needs.

12      (f) SUPPORT FOR INCIDENT METEOROLOGISTS.—

13      The Under Secretary shall provide resources, access to  
14      real-time fire weather forecasts, training, administrative  
15      and logistical support, and access to professional coun-  
16      seling or other forms of support as the Under Secretary  
17      considers appropriate for the betterment of the emotional  
18      and mental health and well-being of incident meteorolo-  
19      gists and other employees of the Administration so long  
20      as the need for such resources, training, access, or support  
21      is due to the response of such employees to high-impact  
22      and extreme fire weather events.

23      **SEC. 8. EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES.**

24      (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1           (1) BASIC PAY.—The term “basic pay” includes  
 2           any applicable locality-based comparability payment  
 3           under section 5304 of title 5, United States Code,  
 4           any applicable special rate supplement under section  
 5           5305 of such title, or any equivalent payment under  
 6           a similar provision of law.

7           (2) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term “covered  
 8           employee” means an employee of the Department of  
 9           Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, or the  
 10          Department of the Interior.

11          (3) COVERED SERVICES.—The term “covered  
 12          services” means services that are performed by a  
 13          covered employee while serving—

14                (A) as a wildland firefighter or a fire man-  
 15                agement response official, including a regional  
 16                fire director, a deputy regional fire director,  
 17                and a fire management officer;

18                (B) as an incident meteorologist accom-  
 19                panying a wildland firefighter crew; or

20                (C) on an incident management team, at  
 21                the National Interagency Fire Center, at a Geo-  
 22                graphic Area Coordinating Center, or at an op-  
 23                erations center.

24          (4) PREMIUM PAY.—The term “premium pay”  
 25          means premium pay paid under a provision of law



described in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of section 5547(a) of title 5, United States Code.

(5) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES.—The term “relevant congressional committees” means—

(A) the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation of the Senate;

(B) the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

(C) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry of the Senate;

(D) the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate;

(E) the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources of the Senate;

(F) the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform of the House of Representatives;

(G) the Committee on Natural Resources of the House of Representatives;

(H) the Committee on Science, Space, and Technology of the House of Representatives;

(I) the Committee on Agriculture of the House of Representative; and

1 (J) the Committee on Appropriations of  
2 the House of Representatives.

3 (6) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-  
4 retary concerned” means—

5 (A) the Secretary of Commerce, with re-  
6 spect to an employee of the Department of  
7 Commerce;

8 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture, with re-  
9 spect to an employee of the Department of Ag-  
10 riculture; and

11 (C) the Secretary of the Interior, with re-  
12 spect to an employee of the Department of the  
13 Interior.

14 (b) WAIVER.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any premium pay received  
16 by a covered employee for covered services shall be  
17 disregarded in calculating the aggregate of the basic  
18 pay and premium pay for the covered employee for  
19 purposes of applying the limitation on premium pay  
20 under section 5547(a) of title 5, United States Code.

21 (2) CALCULATION OF AGGREGATE PAY.—Any  
22 pay that is disregarded under paragraph (1) shall be  
23 disregarded in calculating the aggregate pay of the  
24 applicable covered employee for purposes of applying

1 the limitation under section 5307 of title 5, United  
2 States Code, during calendar year 2025.

3 (3) LIMITATION.—A covered employee may not  
4 be paid premium pay under this subsection if, or to  
5 the extent that, the aggregate of the basic pay and  
6 premium pay (including premium pay for covered  
7 services) of the covered employee for a calendar year  
8 would exceed the rate of basic pay payable for a po-  
9 sition at level II of the Executive Schedule under  
10 section 5313 of title 5, United States Code, as in ef-  
11 fect at the end of that calendar year.

12 (4) TREATMENT OF ADDITIONAL PREMIUM  
13 PAY.—If the application of this subsection results in  
14 the payment of additional premium pay to a covered  
15 employee of a type that is normally creditable as  
16 basic pay for retirement or any other purpose, that  
17 additional premium pay shall not be—

18 (A) considered to be basic pay of the cov-  
19 ered employee for any purpose; or

20 (B) used in computing a lump-sum pay-  
21 ment to the covered employee for accumulated  
22 and accrued annual leave under section 5551 or  
23 5552 of title 5, United States Code.

1           (5) EFFECTIVE PERIOD.—This subsection shall  
2       be in effect during calendar year 2025 and apply to  
3       premium pay payable during that year.

4           (c) AMENDMENT.—Section 5542(a)(5) of title 5,  
5       United States Code, is amended by inserting “, the De-  
6       partment of Commerce,” after “Interior”.

7           (d) PLAN TO ADDRESS NEEDS.—

8           (1) DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—  
9       Not later than March 30, 2026, the Secretaries re-  
10      ferred to in subsection (a)(6), in consultation with  
11      the Director of the Office of Management and Budg-  
12      et and the Director of the Office of Personnel Man-  
13      agement, shall jointly develop and implement a plan  
14      that addresses the needs of the Department of Com-  
15      merce, the Department of Agriculture, and the De-  
16      partment of the Interior, as applicable, to hire, ap-  
17      point, promote, or train additional covered employees  
18      who carry out covered services such that sufficient  
19      covered employees are available throughout each fis-  
20      cal year, beginning in fiscal year 2026, without the  
21      need for waivers of premium pay limitations.

22           (2) SUBMITTAL.—Not later than 30 days before  
23      the date on which the Secretaries implement the  
24      plan developed under paragraph (1), the Secretaries

1 shall submit the plan to the relevant congressional  
2 committees.

3 (3) LIMITATION.—The plan developed under  
4 paragraph (1) shall not be contingent on any Sec-  
5 retary receiving amounts appropriated for fiscal  
6 years beginning in fiscal year 2026 in amounts  
7 greater than amounts appropriated for fiscal year  
8 2024.

9 (e) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR HEALTH, SAFE-  
10 TY, AND WELL-BEING.—The Secretary concerned shall  
11 maintain policies and procedures to promote the health,  
12 safety, and well-being of covered employees.

13 **SEC. 9. SUBMISSIONS TO CONGRESS REGARDING THE FIRE**  
14 **WEATHER SERVICES PROGRAM, INCIDENT**  
15 **METEOROLOGIST WORKFORCE NEEDS, AND**  
16 **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WORKFORCE**  
17 **SUPPORT.**

18 (a) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18  
19 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
20 Under Secretary shall submit to the appropriate commit-  
21 tees of Congress—

- 22 (1) the plan described in subsection (b);
- 23 (2) the assessment described in subsection (c);
- 24 and
- 25 (3) the assessment described in subsection (d).

1 (b) FIRE WEATHER SERVICES PROGRAM PLAN.—

2 (1) ELEMENTS.—The plan submitted under  
3 subsection (a)(1) shall detail—

4 (A) the observational data, modeling re-  
5 quirements, ongoing computational needs, re-  
6 search, development, and technology transfer  
7 activities, data management, skilled-personnel  
8 requirements, engagement with relevant Federal  
9 emergency and land management agencies and  
10 partners, and corresponding research, develop-  
11 ment, and operational resources and timelines  
12 necessary to achieve the functions described in  
13 subsection (b) of section 3 and the priorities de-  
14 scribed in subsection (c) of such section; and

15 (B) plans and needs for all other activities  
16 and requirements under this Act and the  
17 amendments made by this Act.

18 (2) SUBMITTAL OF ANNUAL BUDGET FOR  
19 PLAN.—Following completion of the plan submitted  
20 under subsection (a)(1), the Under Secretary shall,  
21 not less frequently than once each year concurrent  
22 with the submission of the budget by the President  
23 to Congress under section 1105 of title 31, United  
24 States Code, submit to Congress a proposed budget  
25 corresponding with the elements detailed in the plan.

1       (c) INCIDENT METEOROLOGIST WORKFORCE NEEDS  
2 ASSESSMENT.—

3           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall  
4       conduct a workforce needs assessment on the cur-  
5       rent and future demand for additional incident me-  
6       teorologists for wildfires and other high-impact fire  
7       weather events.

8           (2) ELEMENTS.—The assessment required by  
9       paragraph (1) shall include the following:

10           (A) A description of staffing levels as of  
11       the date on which the assessment is submitted  
12       under subsection (a)(2) and projected future  
13       staffing levels.

14           (B) An assessment of the state of the re-  
15       search, development, and operational infrastruc-  
16       ture of the National Weather Service as of the  
17       date on which the assessment is submitted and  
18       future needs of such infrastructure in order to  
19       meet current and future demands, including  
20       with respect to information technology support  
21       and logistical and administrative operations.

22           (3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the as-  
23       sessment required by paragraph (1), the Under Sec-  
24       retary shall consider user needs and feedback from  
25       relevant stakeholders.

1 (d) SUPPORT SERVICES ASSESSMENT.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall  
3 conduct a workforce support services assessment  
4 with respect to employees of the National Weather  
5 Service engaged in emergency response.

6 (2) ELEMENTS.—The assessment required by  
7 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

8 (A) An assessment of need for further sup-  
9 port of employees of the National Weather  
10 Service engaged in emergency response through  
11 services provided by the Public Health Service.

12 (B) A detailed assessment of appropria-  
13 tions required to secure the level of support  
14 services needed as identified in the assessment  
15 described in subparagraph (A).

16 (3) ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES.—Fol-  
17 lowing the completion of the assessment required by  
18 paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall seek to ac-  
19 quire additional support services to meet the needs  
20 identified in the assessment.

21 **SEC. 10. FIRE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING**  
22 **GROUP; STRATEGIC PLAN.**

23 (a) FIRE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING  
24 GROUP.—



1           (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days  
2           after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Ex-  
3           ecutive Director of the Interagency Committee for  
4           Advancing Weather Services established under sec-  
5           tion 402 of the Weather Research and Forecasting  
6           Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8542) (in this  
7           section referred to as the “Interagency Committee”)  
8           shall establish a working group, to be known as the  
9           “Fire Science and Technology Working Group” (in  
10          this section referred to as the “Working Group”).

11          (2) CHAIR.—The Working Group shall be  
12          chaired by the Under Secretary, or designee.

13          (3) GENERAL DUTIES.—

14                (A) IN GENERAL.—The Working Group  
15                shall seek to build efficiencies among the agen-  
16                cies listed under section 12(c)(1) and coordinate  
17                the planning and management of science, re-  
18                search, technology, and operations related to  
19                science and support services for wildland fire  
20                prediction, detection, forecasting, modeling, re-  
21                silience, response, management, and assess-  
22                ments.

23                (B) INPUT.—The Working Group shall so-  
24                licit input from non-Federal stakeholders.

25          (b) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months  
2       after the date of the enactment of this Act, the  
3       Interagency Committee shall prepare and submit to  
4       Congress a strategic plan for interagency coordina-  
5       tion, research, and development that will improve  
6       the assessment of fire environments and the under-  
7       standing and prediction of wildland fires, associated  
8       wildfire smoke, and the impacts of such fires and  
9       smoke, including—

10                (A) on communities, buildings, and other  
11       infrastructure;

12                (B) on ecosystem services and watersheds;

13                (C) social and economic impacts;

14                (D) by developing and encouraging the  
15       adoption of science-based and cost-effective  
16       measures—

17                   (i) to enhance community resilience to  
18       wildland fires;

19                   (ii) to address and mitigate the im-  
20       pacts of wildland fires and associated wild-  
21       fire smoke; and

22                   (iii) to restore natural fire regimes in  
23       fire-dependent ecosystems;

24                (E) by improving the understanding and  
25       mitigation of the effects of weather and long-

1 term drought on wildland fire risk, frequency,  
2 and severity;

3 (F) through integrations of social and be-  
4 havioral sciences in public safety fire commu-  
5 nication;

6 (G) by improving the forecasting and un-  
7 derstanding of prescribed fires and the impacts  
8 of such fires, and how those impacts may differ  
9 from impacts of wildland fires that originate  
10 from an unplanned ignition; and

11 (H) consideration and adoption of any rec-  
12 ommendations included in the report required  
13 by section 12(c).

14 (2) PLAN ELEMENTS.—The strategic plan re-  
15 quired by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

16 (A) A description of the priorities and  
17 needs of vulnerable populations.

18 (B) A description of high-performance  
19 computing, visualization, and dissemination  
20 needs.

21 (C) A timeline and guidance for implemen-  
22 tation of—

23 (i) an interagency data sharing sys-  
24 tem for data relevant to performing fire

1 assessments and modeling fire risk and fire  
2 behavior;

3 (ii) a system for ensuring that the fire  
4 prediction models of relevant agencies can  
5 be interconnected; and

6 (iii) to the maximum extent prac-  
7 ticable, any recommendations included in  
8 the report required by section 12(c).

9 (D) A plan for incorporating and coordi-  
10 nating research and operational observations,  
11 including from infrared technologies, micro-  
12 wave, radars, satellites, mobile weather stations,  
13 and uncrewed aerial systems.

14 (E) A flexible framework to communicate  
15 clear and simple fire event information to the  
16 public.

17 (F) Integration of social, behavioral, risk,  
18 and communication research to improve the fire  
19 operational environment and societal informa-  
20 tion reception and response.

21 (c) SUNSET.—The Working Group shall terminate  
22 not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of  
23 this Act.

1 **SEC. 11. FIRE WEATHER RATING SYSTEM.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall, in col-  
3 laboration with the Chief of the United States Forest  
4 Service, the Director of the United States Geological Sur-  
5 vey, the Director of the National Park Service, the Admin-  
6 istrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency,  
7 the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-  
8 ice, the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Di-  
9 rector of the Bureau of Land Management, and such  
10 stakeholders as the Under Secretary considers appro-  
11 priate—

12 (1) evaluate the system used as of the date of  
13 the enactment of this Act to rate the risk of wildfire;  
14 and

15 (2) determine whether updates to that system  
16 are required to ensure that the ratings accurately re-  
17 flect the severity of fire risk.

18 (b) UPDATE REQUIRED.—If the Under Secretary de-  
19 termines under subsection (a) that updates to the system  
20 described in paragraph (1) of such subsection are nec-  
21 essary, the Under Secretary shall update that system.

22 **SEC. 12. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE RE-**  
23 **PORTS.**

24 (a) REPORT ON FIRE WEATHER SERVICES PRO-  
25 GRAM.—

1           (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after  
 2           the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comp-  
 3           troller General of the United States shall submit to  
 4           Congress a report on the program established under  
 5           section 3(a).

6           (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-  
 7           graph (1) shall—

8                   (A) evaluate the performance of the pro-  
 9                   gram by establishing initial baseline capabilities  
 10                  and tracking progress made toward fully  
 11                  operationalizing the functions described in sec-  
 12                  tion 3(b); and

13                  (B) include such other recommendations as  
 14                  the Comptroller General determines are appro-  
 15                  priate to improve the program.

16       (b) REPORT ON INTERAGENCY BODIES FOR WILD-  
 17       FIRE FORECASTING, PREVENTION, PLANNING, AND MAN-  
 18       AGEMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the  
 19       enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the  
 20       United States shall submit to Congress a report that—

21           (1) identifies all Federal interagency bodies es-  
 22           tablished for the purpose of wildfire forecasting, pre-  
 23           vention, planning, and management (such as wildfire  
 24           councils, commissions, and workgroups), including—

25                   (A) the Wildland Fire Leadership Council;

1 (B) the White House Wildfire Resilience  
2 Interagency Group;

3 (C) the Wildland Fire Management Policy  
4 Committee;

5 (D) the Wildland Fire Mitigation and  
6 Management Commission;

7 (E) the Joint Science Fire Program;

8 (F) the National Interagency Coordination  
9 Center;

10 (G) the National Predictive Services Over-  
11 sight Group;

12 (H) the Interagency Council for Advancing  
13 Meteorological Services;

14 (I) the National Wildfire Coordinating  
15 Group;

16 (J) the National Multi-Agency Coordi-  
17 nating Group; and

18 (K) the Mitigation Framework Leadership  
19 Group;

20 (2) evaluates the roles, functionality, and utility  
21 of such interagency bodies;

22 (3) evaluates the progress, performance, and  
23 implementation of such interagency bodies;

24 (4) assesses efficacy and identifies potential  
25 overlap and duplication of such interagency bodies in

1 carrying out interagency collaboration with respect  
2 to wildfire prevention, planning, and management;  
3 and

4 (5) includes such other recommendations as the  
5 Comptroller General determines are appropriate to  
6 streamline and improve wildfire forecasting, preven-  
7 tion, planning, and management, including rec-  
8 ommendations regarding the interagency bodies for  
9 which the addition of the Administration is nec-  
10 essary to improve wildfire forecasting, prevention,  
11 planning, and management.

12 (c) REPORT ON INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—Not  
13 later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this  
14 Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall  
15 submit to Congress a report that identifies—

16 (1) the authorities, roles, and science and sup-  
17 port services relating to wildland fire prediction, de-  
18 tection, forecasting, modeling, resilience, response,  
19 management, and assessment provided by—

20 (A) the Department of Commerce, includ-  
21 ing the Administration and the National Insti-  
22 tute of Standards and Technology;

23 (B) the National Aeronautics and Space  
24 Administration;

25 (C) the Department of the Interior;



- 1 (D) the Department of Agriculture;
- 2 (E) the National Science Foundation;
- 3 (F) the Department of Energy;
- 4 (G) the Federal Emergency Management
- 5 Agency;
- 6 (H) the Department of Transportation;
- 7 (I) the Environmental Protection Agency;
- 8 and
- 9 (J) the Department of Defense; and

10 (2) recommended areas in and mechanisms by  
11 which the agencies listed under paragraph (1) could  
12 support and improve—

13 (A) coordination between Federal agencies,  
14 State and local governments, Indian tribes,  
15 Tribal organizations, Native Hawaiian organi-  
16 zations, and other relevant stakeholders, includ-  
17 ing through examination of possible public-pri-  
18 vate partnerships;

19 (B) research and development, including  
20 interdisciplinary research, related to fire envi-  
21 ronments, wildland fires, associated wildfire  
22 smoke, and the impacts of such environments,  
23 fires, and smoke, in furtherance of a coordi-  
24 nated interagency effort to address wildland fire  
25 risk reduction;

1 (C) data management and stewardship, the  
2 development and coordination of data systems  
3 and computational tools, and the creation of a  
4 centralized, integrated data collaboration envi-  
5 ronment for agency data, including historical  
6 data, relating to weather, fire environments,  
7 wildland fires, associated wildfire smoke, and  
8 the impacts of such environments, fires, and  
9 smoke, and the assessment of wildland fire risk  
10 mitigation measures;

11 (D) interoperability, usability, and accessi-  
12 bility of the scientific data, data systems, and  
13 computational and information tools of the  
14 agencies listed under paragraph (1);

15 (E) coordinated public safety communica-  
16 tions relating to fire weather events, fire haz-  
17 ards, and wildland fire and smoke risk reduc-  
18 tion strategies; and

19 (F) secure and accurate real-time data,  
20 alerts, and advisories to wildland firefighters  
21 and other decision support tools for wildland  
22 fire incident command posts.

23 (d) REPORT ON AUTOMATED SURFACE OBSERVING  
24 SYSTEM.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the

1 enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the  
2 United States shall submit to Congress a report that—

3           (1) evaluates the functionality, utility, reli-  
4 ability, and operational status of the automated sur-  
5 face observing system across the Administration, the  
6 Federal Aviation Administration, and the Depart-  
7 ment of Defense;

8           (2) evaluates the progress, performance, and  
9 implementation of the plan required by section  
10 6(b)(1)(B);

11           (3) assesses the efficacy of cross-agency collabo-  
12 ration and stakeholder engagement in carrying out  
13 the plan and provides recommendations to improve  
14 such activities;

15           (4) evaluates the operational continuity and re-  
16 liability of the system, particularly in remote and  
17 rural areas and areas where system failure would  
18 have the greatest negative impact to the community,  
19 and provides recommendations to improve such con-  
20 tinuity and reliability;

21           (5) assesses Federal coordination regarding the  
22 remote automatic weather station network, air re-  
23 source advisors, and other Federal observing assets  
24 used for weather and climate modeling and response

1 activities, and provides recommendations for im-  
2 provements; and

3 (6) includes such other recommendations as the  
4 Comptroller General determines are appropriate to  
5 improve the system.

6 **SEC. 13. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION.**

7 (a) COOPERATION.—Each Federal agency shall co-  
8 operate and coordinate with the Under Secretary, as ap-  
9 propriate, in carrying out this Act and the amendments  
10 made by this Act.

11 (b) COORDINATION.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—In meeting the requirements  
13 under this Act and the amendments made by this  
14 Act, the Under Secretary shall coordinate, and as  
15 appropriate, establish agreements with Federal and  
16 external partners to fully use and leverage existing  
17 assets, systems, networks, technologies, and sources  
18 of data.

19 (2) INCLUSIONS.—Coordination carried out  
20 under paragraph (1) shall include coordination  
21 with—

22 (A) the agencies represented at the Na-  
23 tional Interagency Fire Center;

24 (B) the Predictive Services Program of the  
25 National Interagency Coordination Center;

1 (C) the National Wildfire Coordinating  
2 Group; and

3 (D) relevant interagency bodies identified  
4 in the report required by section 12(b).

5 (3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this sub-  
6 section, the Under Secretary shall consult with Fed-  
7 eral partners including—

8 (A) the National Aeronautics and Space  
9 Administration;

10 (B) the Department of the Interior;

11 (C) the Federal Emergency Management  
12 Agency;

13 (D) the National Science Foundation;

14 (E) the United States Geological Survey;

15 (F) the Department of Agriculture;

16 (G) the Environmental Protection Agency;

17 (H) the Department of Energy;

18 (I) the Department of Defense;

19 (J) the National Institute of Standards  
20 and Technology; and

21 (K) such other departments and agencies  
22 as the Under Secretary considers relevant.

23 (c) PROCESS FOR ANNUAL COORDINATION WITH  
24 NON-FEDERAL ENTITIES.—Not later than 18 months  
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under

1 Secretary shall develop and submit to the appropriate  
 2 committees of Congress a process for annual coordination  
 3 with State and local governments, Indian tribes, Tribal or-  
 4 ganizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to assist  
 5 the development of improved fire weather products and  
 6 services.

7 (d) INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary may  
 9 develop collaborative relationships and agreements  
 10 with foreign partners and counterparts to address  
 11 transboundary issues pertaining to wildfires, fire  
 12 weather, wildfire smoke, air quality, and associated  
 13 conditions and hazards or other relevant meteorolog-  
 14 ical phenomena, as appropriate, to facilitate full and  
 15 open exchange of data and information.

16 (2) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out activities  
 17 under this subsection, the Under Secretary shall  
 18 consult with the Department of State and such other  
 19 Federal partners as the Under Secretary considers  
 20 relevant.

21 **SEC. 14. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

22 (a) AVOIDANCE OF DUPLICATION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall  
 24 ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that ac-  
 25 tivities carried out under this Act and the amend-

1       ments made by this Act are not duplicative of activi-  
 2       ties supported by other parts of the Administration  
 3       or other relevant Federal agencies.

4           (2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out activities  
 5       under this Act and the amendments made by this  
 6       Act, the Under Secretary shall coordinate with the  
 7       Administration and heads of other Federal research  
 8       agencies—

9           (A) to ensure those activities enhance and  
 10       complement, but do not constitute unnecessary  
 11       duplication of, efforts; and

12          (B) to ensure the responsible stewardship  
 13       of funds.

14       (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act  
 15       may be construed—

16          (1) to satisfy any requirement for government-  
 17       to-government consultation with Indian tribes; or

18          (2) to affect or modify any treaty or other right  
 19       of any Indian tribe.

20       **SEC. 15. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

21       (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-  
 22       priated to the Administration to carry out this Act and  
 23       the amendments made by this Act—

24          (1) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;

25          (2) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2027;

1           (3) \$27,000,000 for fiscal year 2028;

2           (4) \$36,000,000 for fiscal year 2029; and

3           (5) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2030.

4           (b) PROHIBITION.—None of the amounts authorized  
5 to be appropriated by subsection (a) may be used to un-  
6 necessarily duplicate activities funded under title VIII of  
7 division D of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act  
8 (Public Law 117–58; 135 Stat. 1094).

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