



STATE OF ARIZONA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

DOUGLAS A. DUCEY
GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

July 2, 2018

Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary
US Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, DC 20250

Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
US Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

RE: State of Arizona - Wildfire Reimbursements

Dear Sirs,

I ask for your attention and action on a highly important issue for the wildland firefighting community in Arizona.

Over the last few years, Arizona has made meaningful efforts to ensure local wildland fire districts and other cooperators promptly recover costs incurred in responding to wildfires and related incidents on federal lands. In 2016, Arizona established a \$10 million account within the State's Budget Stabilization Fund. The fund enables the State to reimburse local cooperators for the costs incurred in a timely manner and subsequently request reimbursement from the federal government. In addition, Arizona's Department of Emergency and Military Affairs has decreased the average reimbursement time to its partner organizations from 86 days to 17 days through improved stakeholder outreach and internal process improvements. Although these steps have facilitated prompt reimbursement of local cooperators by the State, Arizona still finds itself in the position of dealing with significant delays for federal reimbursements. These delays result in serious resource deficiencies for our local cooperators.

Through the aforementioned Budget Stabilization Fund, Arizona has paid all of its \$10 million fund to local cooperators. Of this amount, Arizona has billed federal agencies for \$7.5 million and is in the process of billing the remaining \$2.5 million. In addition to the \$10 million, our local cooperators have incurred another \$3.2 million in costs by responding to federal fire incidents. Having exhausted the \$10 million fund, the State is unable to promptly reimburse our local cooperators for the \$3.2 million. And, without the ability to reimburse local cooperators, the State is also unable to bill federal agencies for the funds. It is for this reason that I ask for your attention and prompt action.

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I believe there is an important and significant opportunity for your administration to assist and respond to the needs of local communities across Arizona. The need is significant, especially for small rural fire districts, and other cooperators, who do not have the capacity to go without reimbursement for extended periods of time.

The information below illustrates the situation as we understand it. If you have any questions related to this information, please contact my administration's Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting (OSPB) Director, Matthew Gress, at mgress@az.gov.

Agency Billed	Invoices	Outstanding Reimbursement Amount	Average Days Outstanding
Bureau of Indian Affairs	39	\$ 902,192.49	193
Bureau of Land Management	54	979,913.43	120
FEMA	1	263,754.73	81
Forest Service	108	5,223,750.83	106
National Park Service	6	78,931.89	174
US Fish & Wildlife	2	8,780.70	79
Totals	210	\$ 7,457,324.07	127

Arizona is committed to continuing a strong cooperative partnership with the federal government in fighting the significant fire threats that exist across the country. In the next few months, Arizona will continue to see dangerous conditions and a potentially high level of action by wildland fire cooperators. I ask that your teams review this issue, take steps to reimburse the State in a timely manner, and provide options of how we can work together to provide a permanent solution to this urgent problem.

Sincerely,



Douglas A. Ducey
Governor
State of Arizona

cc: Senator John McCain
Senator Jeff Flake
Senator Gail Griffin
Representative Rusty Bowers
Tim Williams – Department of Interior
Blake Rollins – Department of Agriculture