



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF STATE FORESTERS

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February 25, 2022

Homer Wilkes
Undersecretary for Natural Resources and Environment
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Undersecretary Wilkes,

The National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and its members congratulate you on your Senate confirmation to serve as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) undersecretary for Natural Resource and Environment (NRE). We know you understand how crucial our work with family forest landowners is to achieving national conservation goals and we look forward to continuing that work with you as NRE undersecretary.

We understand addressing wildfire management is among your top priorities. NASF and the nation's state foresters stand ready to work shoulder-to-shoulder with USDA and the Forest Service to implement the agency's 10-Year Wildfire Crisis Strategy. We also look forward to offering our expertise in support of the newly established Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission.

NASF speaks on wildland fire issues with one voice shared by all state forestry agencies. The association maintains representation on the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, at the National Interagency Fire Center, and as part of the National Wildfire Coordinating Group and the National Multi-Agency Coordinating Group. NASF's Wildland Fire Committee and CMS Network, which taps the expertise of state wildland fire chiefs, managers, and supervisors, can also provide valuable expertise to the Commission.

State forestry agencies are responsible for providing wildfire protection across 1.56 billion acres. They contribute to wildland fire management nationwide by training and deploying tens of thousands of wildland firefighters, building mitigation and response capacity among communities and volunteer fire departments, and dedicating upwards of \$2 billion to suppression efforts each year. State forestry agencies' experience in wildfire prevention, mitigation, and suppression extends from national-level leadership to the field where state foresters work to deliver forestry programs and bolster wildfire protection efforts with conservation districts, local and county governments, tribes, and federal agencies.

NASF would proudly serve on the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. We look forward to working together to find expedient solutions for managing wildfires – before they consume both state and federal budgets, destroy our cherished communities, and irrevocably alter American landscapes.

Executive Director
Jay Farrell

2021-2022 Executive Committee

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NASF's unique position as a trusted member of the wildland fire community would provide tried-and-true perspective to the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Please consider NASF for representation on the commission as one of the 18 non-federal stakeholders with expertise in wildland fire preparedness, mitigation, suppression, or management. If called upon, we stand ready to serve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Christopher R. Martin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'C' and a distinct 'R'.

Christopher Martin
NASF President
Connecticut State Forester