

November 15, 2021

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
House of Representatives
1401 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Lofgren:

The University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (UCAR) writes to enthusiastically support H.R. 5781, the National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program Act. UCAR is a nonprofit consortium of 122 North American colleges and universities focused on research and training in the Earth system sciences. For more than 50 years, we have managed the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR) on behalf of the National Science Foundation, stewarding the priorities of the Earth system science community.

UCAR appreciates the thoughtfulness and care that went into drafting this legislation and is grateful that your staff took the time to reach out to NCAR scientists who were able to discuss their critical work relating to coupled weather-fire modeling, fuel moisture content, fire spread prediction, and provide important feedback in helping to craft the final proposal.

The National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program is a bold and necessary step to achieving measurable progress in reducing wildland fire risk across the United States. As western drought continues to persist, and in many cases worsen, the threat of wildland fire continues to grow. If our understanding of the threat of wildland fire is to keep pace with our changing climate, we must improve our prediction and mitigation capabilities to protect lives and property

The National Wildland Fire Risk Reduction Program lays out how the federal research enterprise would mobilize to address the threat of wildland fire across more than a dozen federal agencies through the Interagency Coordinating Committee on Wildland Fire Risk Reduction. The committee is a key pillar of the legislation, which will require that federal agencies work together to address what is truly a multi-jurisdictional issue in wildland fire.

UCAR also supports the significant authorizations outlined in the legislation that recognize the severity of the wildland fire problem and the urgent need to make significant investments in order to make significant progress on this issue in a short amount of time.

We look forward to seeing this legislation move through the House Science, Space and Technology Committee process and look forward to its eventual consideration by the full House of Representatives.

Sincerely,

Dr. Antonio J. Busalacchi Jr.