



Secretary Brooke L. Rollins

**UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20250**

SECRETARY'S MEMORANDUM 1078-011

May 20, 2025

**RESPONDING TO AND MITIGATING THE THREATS FROM WILDLAND FIRE AT THE
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

1. PURPOSE

This Secretarial Memorandum implements provisions of President Donald J. Trump's vision to address the threat of wildfire in the United States. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is the "People's Department," and since our inception, we have been called upon to provide direct services to the American people, including responding to and mitigating the threat of wildfire. It is our duty to safeguard American families, communities, infrastructure, and natural resources—coast to coast, every single day of the year. USDA is working to eliminate red tape, cut costs, and engage state, local, Tribal, and private sector partners to ensure we have the necessary resources to confront the national wildfire emergency. This Secretarial Memorandum provides clear expectations about USDA's approach to responding to wildfires and directs all Mission Areas to support our commitment to wildfire preparedness and response. It further directs the U.S. Forest Service to take several organizational actions to ensure operational readiness.

USDA will work across President Trump's cabinet and with our trusted state, local, and Tribal partners to ensure our nation's wildland firefighting system is highly coordinated and focused on fighting wildfires quickly and effectively. USDA stands ready to work together to ensure we take the necessary, immediate, and bold actions to protect people, communities, and the natural resources on which this country depends.

2. AUTHORITIES

This Memorandum is issued under the authority of the Organic Administration Act of 1897 (16 U.S.C. §§ 472 and 551); Weeks Act of 1911 (16 U.S.C. §§ 515, 516-519, 521, 552, 563); and Healthy Forest Restoration Act (16 U.S.C. § 6501 *et seq.*) as well as other statutory authorities governing the management, administration, and protection of the National Forest System. Other authorities include, but are not limited to, Executive Order (EO) 14225, Immediate Expansion of American Timber Production, dated March 1, 2025.

3. BACKGROUND

We have already seen significant wildfire activity across the Nation, from the devastating wildfires in Southern California to the ongoing fires in the Carolinas. More than one million acres have burned this year, significantly exceeding the ten-year average, and the outlook shows above normal temperatures and drier than normal conditions across the West. This means more people, homes, communities, and landscapes are at risk, and the need for firefighters and fire support personnel is clear.

Given that we face prime conditions for large wildfires, it necessitates a response that engages the entire Department. Responding to wildfires will be our highest priority work, and the safety of the public and our brave men and women on the frontlines is paramount. We will deploy thousands of firefighters and fire support personnel this summer. These individuals will work tirelessly to respond with strength, speed, and effectiveness. As a Department, we must do all we can to support this effort and assure the safety of our personnel.

4. DIRECTIVES

- A. I hereby direct all USDA Mission Areas to assess their ability to assist with wildfire response within 30 days. Agency administrators should assess the following:
- Take all necessary steps to ensure employees who can support wildfire response have the ability and leadership support to secure or maintain their fireline or fire support qualifications (i.e., “Red Cards”);
 - Assess all business processes and support systems for contracting and purchasing and identify any additional capacity available to assist with wildfire response during peak wildfire activity; and
 - Prioritize funding to increase opportunities for communities and private landowners to reduce wildfire risk.
- B. Given the U.S. Forest Service has the strongest and most prepared wildland firefighting force in the world, I hereby direct the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service within 30 days to:
- Identify the impact of the voluntary departures on the firefighting and fire support workforce and propose a plan and timeline to remedy critical vacancies and immediate changes to business practices to ensure adequate resource capability and mobilization; and
 - Identify and eliminate all barriers and unnecessary procedures, and make use of all needed waivers, to ensure rapid resource deployment when there are imminent threats to life and property this summer.

At Preparedness Level 3 and above, I hereby direct the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service to:

- Prioritize and redeploy the non-fire workforce to support wildfire response as wildfire activity increases. This will include a necessary adjustment to the agency’s other program work. The agency shall provide updates every 30 days to the Natural Resources and Environment Mission Area on workforce capacity constraints and anticipated impacts; and

- Exercise all available authorities, consistent with prior direction, to ensure the agency is using every tool and authority available to meet the Nation's wildfire response needs.

Throughout wildfire season, I hereby direct the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service to:

- Prioritize wildfire risk reduction efforts in and around communities at risk of wildfire and, where possible, continue to offer timber volume consistent with EO 14225; and
- Use all available emergency authorities, including those outlined in Secretarial Memorandum 1078-006, to prioritize post-fire hazard tree removal and salvage activities as appropriate.

5. IMPLEMENTATION

The Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment is responsible for implementing all aspects of this memorandum, in coordination with the Office of the General Counsel. In the absence of an Under Secretary or Deputy, the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service will carry out these responsibilities.

6. EFFECTS OF THE MEMORANDUM

This memorandum is intended to improve the internal management of the Department and to assure implementation of my expectations for USDA's approach to wildfire response and mitigation and is therefore not a final agency action within the meaning of such term in chapter 5 of title 5. This memorandum and any resulting report or recommendations are not intended to, and do not create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, instrumentalities or entities, its officers or employees, or any other person. To the extent there is any inconsistency between the provisions of this memorandum and any Federal laws or regulations, the laws or regulations will control.

7. EFFECTIVE DATE

This memorandum is effective immediately.

/s/ Brooke L. Rollins
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture