Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 28, 2026

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Tom Schultz
Chief
U.S. Forest Service
1400 Independence Ave
Washington, D.C. 20250

**RE: U.S. Forest Service Reorganization**

Dear Secretary Rollins and Chief Schultz:

We write to express our strong opposition to the proposed reorganization of the U.S. Forest Service announced by the Department of Agriculture on March 31, 2026. The Forest Service manages more than 193 million acres of public lands across our nation, making it the federal government's second-largest public lands agency. The decision to relocate the agency's headquarters and eliminate its world-class research program undermines our efforts to confront the dual crises of climate change and catastrophic wildfires while worsening the already severe loss of staff and expertise since the start of President Trump's second term.

The United States is about to enter what many predict will be a devastating fire season, driven by extremely dry vegetation and a severe snow deficit directly linked to climate change. This reorganization proposal would close 57 of the agency's 77 research stations across 31 states, including stations that study wildfire, drought, pests, and climate change—all of which pose immediate and growing threats to our national forests and nearby communities—and threaten to take decades of staff expertise with them. Already, this administration's efforts to dismantle the Forest Service have already led to a nearly 40 percent reduction in hazardous fuels work, leaving forests, public lands, and surrounding communities vulnerable, and the proposed reorganization threatens to make that damage even worse.[1]

[1] Grassroots Wildland Firefighters, *Memo on Declines in Wildfire Preparedness*. October 2025.

Public land agencies across the nation—including the Forest Service—are already reeling from devastating staff losses that began in February 2025, when the agency illegally fired thousands of staff. This was swiftly followed by the systematic harassment, intimidation, and pressure on staff to resign or retire, leading to the loss of more than 25 percent of Forest Service personnel, including "red card" staff qualified to assist with the agency's wildfire response efforts. Additionally, the administration has repeatedly proposed slashing the agency's budget. President Trump's FY 2027 budget proposed a 75 percent across-the-board cut, the wholesale elimination of Forest Service research and state, private, and tribal forestry programs, and the transfer of wildfire management responsibilities to the Interior Department.

Relocating the Forest Service's headquarters would further weaken the agency by driving out experienced staff, disrupting operations, compromising institutional knowledge, and ultimately rendering its mission unachievable. During the first Trump administration, the Department of the Interior moved the Bureau of Land Management from Washington, D.C. to Grand Junction, Colorado – a decision that resulted in an exodus of 87 percent of staff and a generational loss of expertise from which the agency has never recovered. The Government Accountability Office found that the implementation was thinly justified and implemented in a haphazard manner.[2]

The proposed Forest Service reorganization follows the same destructive pattern. It threatens to permanently cripple the agency, sever fire management from public land stewardship, and gut the research that underpins science-based forest management, including wildfire response. It is also the latest in a series of attacks on the Forest Service carried out without necessary congressional approval or input. We therefore ask that you provide Congress with the details of any consultations, comment opportunities, analysis, and decision-making processes related to this proposal so that Congress can fully evaluate it and represent the interests of our constituents and the American people, who have a direct stake in keeping Forest Service lands public, accessible, and healthy.

Our nation's public forests are not just a lumber yard. They provide us with clean air and water, offer unmatched outdoor recreational opportunities, and fortify communities and ways of life across the country. We urge you to halt all reorganizational efforts and immediately consult with both parties in Congress on a responsible path forward for the Forest Service.

Sincerely,

[2] Government Accountability Office, *Bureau of Land Management: Agency's Reorganization Efforts Did Not Substantially Address Key Practices for Effective Reforms.* March 6, 2020.

Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, Committee
on Natural Resources

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress

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Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

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Gwen S. Moore
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