

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 2038

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the Wildfire Science
and Technology Advisory Board.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JUNE 11, 2025

Mr. GALLEGO introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred
to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

A BILL

To direct the Secretary of the Interior to establish the
Wildfire Science and Technology Advisory Board.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wildfire Coordination
5 Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. WILDFIRE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY**
7 **BOARD.**

8 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of the Interior
9 shall establish a permanent advisory committee, to be

1 known as the Wildfire Science and Technology Advisory
2 Board (referred to in this section as the “Board”).

3 (b) DUTIES.—The Board shall—

4 (1) coordinate the operationalization within the
5 Federal Government of wildfire research, including
6 by—

7 (A) identifying avenues for translating
8 wildfire research into practical applications;

9 (B) establishing criteria and frameworks to
10 prioritize wildfire research projects for
11 operationalization;

12 (C) facilitating the transition of prioritized
13 wildfire research into operational projects;

14 (D) connecting and supporting entities in
15 wildfire research and operations;

16 (E) providing feedback to refine and en-
17 hance wildfire research outputs for practical ap-
18 plication; and

19 (F) partnering, as the Board determines
20 appropriate, with private sector and federally
21 funded research centers to further the work of
22 the Board;

23 (2) encourage wildfire researchers and Federal
24 agencies undertaking wildfire operations to in-
25 clude—

1 (A) relevant disciplines, such as public
 2 health, meteorological science, and predictive
 3 modeling; and

4 (B) consideration of built and natural fire-
 5 prone environments; and

6 (3) disseminate information, including by—

7 (A) establishing mechanisms, such as
 8 newsletters and publications, online portals,
 9 webinars, and workshops, to disseminate wild-
 10 fire research findings, operational best prac-
 11 tices, and resources to relevant stakeholders
 12 and practitioners; and

13 (B) promoting activities of the Board to
 14 ensure visibility and accessibility to stake-
 15 holders.

16 (c) MEMBERSHIP.—

17 (1) NUMBER AND APPOINTMENT.—The Board
 18 shall be composed of the following members:

19 (A) The Secretary of the Interior (or a
 20 designee).

21 (B) The Secretary of Agriculture (or a des-
 22 ignee).

23 (C) The Secretary of Commerce (or a des-
 24 ignee).

1 (D) The Chief of the Forest Service (or a
2 designee).

3 (E) The Director of the Bureau of Indian
4 Affairs (or a designee).

5 (F) The Director of the Bureau of Land
6 Management (or a designee).

7 (G) The Administrator of the Federal
8 Emergency Management Agency (or a designee,
9 except that such designee may not be the mem-
10 ber of the Board serving pursuant to subpara-
11 graph (H)).

12 (H) The United States Fire Administrator
13 (or a designee).

14 (I) The Director of the United States Fish
15 and Wildlife Service (or a designee).

16 (J) The Administrator of the National
17 Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (or a
18 designee).

19 (K) The Director of the National Park
20 Service (or a designee).

21 (L) The Director of the National Institute
22 of Standards and Technology (or a designee).

23 (M) The Director of the United States Ge-
24 ological Survey (or a designee).

1 (N) The Director of the Office of Science
2 and Technology Policy (or a designee).

3 (O) The Director of the National Science
4 Foundation (or a designee).

5 (P) The Administrator of the National
6 Aeronautics and Space Administration (or a
7 designee).

8 (Q) The Director of the Centers for Dis-
9 ease Control and Prevention (or a designee).

10 (R) The Administrator of the Environ-
11 mental Protection Agency (or a designee).

12 (S) Not more than 18 non-Federal mem-
13 bers, to be appointed by the Secretary of the
14 Interior, as follows:

15 (i) At least 1 representative from each
16 of the following:

17 (I) State government.

18 (II) Local government.

19 (III) Tribal government.

20 (ii) Representatives of fire depart-
21 ments.

22 (iii) Representatives of relevant pri-
23 vate-sector entities, such as codes and
24 standards-setting organizations, prescribed
25 fire associations, and entities with exper-

tise in wildfire science and wildfire risk identification, transfer, and mitigation.

(iv) Wildfire, forest health, or ecological restoration researchers.

(v) Public health experts.

(vi) Meteorological scientists.

(vii) Predictive modeling experts.

(viii) Such other members as the Secretary of the Interior determines to be appropriate.

(2) TERMS.—

(A) IN GENERAL.—Each member of the Board serving pursuant to paragraph (1)(S) shall be appointed for a term of 2 years.

(B) VACANCIES.—A vacancy on the Board shall be filled in the manner in which the original appointment was made.

(3) PAY AND EXPENSES.—

(A) PROHIBITION ON COMPENSATION.—A member of the Board shall serve without compensation.

(B) TRAVEL EXPENSES.—Each member of the Board shall receive travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, in accordance with the applicable provisions of sub-

1 chapter I of chapter 57 of title 5, United States
2 Code.

3 (4) CHAIRPERSON.—

4 (A) IN GENERAL.—Except as provided in
5 subparagraph (B), the Chairperson shall rotate
6 annually among the members of the Board
7 serving pursuant to subparagraphs (A), (B),
8 and (C) of paragraph (1), beginning with the
9 member serving pursuant to paragraph (1)(A),
10 followed by the member serving pursuant to
11 paragraph (1)(B).

12 (B) EXCEPTION.—For any term, the mem-
13 bers of the Board may designate a member of
14 the Board to serve as the Chairperson of the
15 Board in lieu of the official (or the designee
16 thereof) who would otherwise serve as the
17 Chairperson pursuant to subparagraph (A).

18 (5) STAFF; TEMPORARY AND INTERMITTENT
19 SERVICES.—

20 (A) STAFF.—The Board may appoint per-
21 sonnel as it considers appropriate.

22 (B) PAY.—The Chairperson of the Board
23 may fix the compensation of the personnel ap-
24 pointed under subparagraph (A) without regard
25 to the provisions of chapter 51 and subchapter

1 III of chapter 53 of title 5, United States Code,
2 relating to classification of positions and Gen-
3 eral Schedule pay rates, except that the rate of
4 pay for such personnel may not exceed the an-
5 nual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V of
6 the Executive Schedule under section 5316 of
7 such title.

8 (C) DETAIL OF FEDERAL EMPLOYEES.—

9 (i) IN GENERAL.—The head of any
10 Federal department or agency may detail
11 any of the personnel of that department or
12 agency to the Board.

13 (ii) EFFECT.—A detail under clause
14 (i) shall be without reimbursement and
15 without interruption or loss of civil service
16 status or privilege.

17 (D) PROCUREMENT OF TEMPORARY AND
18 INTERMITTENT SERVICES.—The Chairperson of
19 the Board may procure temporary and intermit-
20 tent services under section 3109(b) of title 5,
21 United States Code, at rates for individuals
22 that do not exceed the daily equivalent of the
23 annual rate of basic pay prescribed for level V
24 of the Executive Schedule under section 5316
25 of that title.

1 (d) REPORT.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years after
3 the date of enactment of this Act, the Board shall
4 submit to the relevant congressional committees a
5 report, which shall—

6 (A) detail the activities of the Board;

7 (B) discuss progress on transitioning wild-
8 fire research into operations within the Federal
9 Government;

10 (C) discuss barriers to successfully
11 transitioning wildfire research into operations
12 within the Federal Government; and

13 (D) provide recommendations on future
14 wildfire research priorities and operational
15 needs.

16 (2) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
17 TEES.—In this subsection, the term “relevant con-
18 gressional committees” means—

19 (A) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
20 tion, and Forestry, the Committee on Com-
21 merce, Science, and Transportation, the Com-
22 mittee on Energy and Natural Resources, the
23 Committee on Environment and Public Works,
24 and the Committee on Homeland Security and
25 Governmental Affairs of the Senate; and

1 (B) the Committee on Agriculture, the
2 Committee on Natural Resources, the Com-
3 mittee on Science, Space, and Technology, and
4 the Committee on Transportation and Infra-
5 structure of the House of Representatives.

6 (e) TERMINATION.—Section 1013(a)(2) of title 5,
7 United States Code, shall not apply to the Board.

8 (f) FUNDING.—

9 (1) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—
10 There is authorized to be appropriated to carry out
11 this section \$10,000,000, to remain available until
12 expended.

13 (2) ADDITIONAL FUNDING.—In addition to the
14 amounts made available pursuant to paragraph (1),
15 the Federal members of the Board may, for pur-
16 poses of carrying out this section, use amounts the
17 purpose of which is not otherwise specified by the
18 appropriations laws available to the employing agen-
19 cies of such members.

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