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1ST SESSION

S. 306

To establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and for other purposes.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JANUARY 29, 2025

Ms. CANTWELL (for herself, Mr. SHEEHY, Mr. CRUZ, Mr. LUJÁN, Mr. SULLIVAN, Ms. ROSEN, Ms. MURKOWSKI, and Mr. PADILLA) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

A BILL

To establish and maintain a coordinated program within the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration that improves wildfire, fire weather, fire risk, and wildfire smoke related forecasting, detection, modeling, observations, and service delivery, and for other purposes.

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; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

4 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This Act may be cited as the
5 “Fire Ready Nation Act of 2025”.

1 (b) TABLE OF CONTENTS.—The table of contents for
 2 this Act is as follows:

- Sec. 1. Short title; table of contents.
- Sec. 2. Definitions.
- Sec. 3. Establishment of fire weather services program.
- Sec. 4. Fire weather testbed.
- Sec. 5. Data management and technology modernization.
- Sec. 6. Surveys and assessments.
- Sec. 7. Incident Meteorologist Service.
- Sec. 8. Emergency response activities.
- Sec. 9. Submissions to Congress regarding the fire weather services program,
 incident meteorologist workforce needs, and National Weather
 Service workforce support.
- Sec. 10. Fire Science and Technology Working Group; strategic plan.
- Sec. 11. Fire weather rating system.
- Sec. 12. Government Accountability Office reports.
- Sec. 13. Cooperation and coordination.
- Sec. 14. General provisions.
- Sec. 15. Authorization of appropriations.

3 **SEC. 2. DEFINITIONS.**

4 In this Act:

5 (1) ADMINISTRATION.—The term “Administra-
 6 tion” means the National Oceanic and Atmospheric
 7 Administration.

8 (2) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
 9 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
 10 gress” means—

11 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
 12 and Transportation of the Senate; and

13 (B) the Committee on Science, Space, and
 14 Technology of the House of Representatives.

15 (3) EARTH SYSTEM MODEL.—The term “Earth
 16 system model” means a mathematical model con-
 17 taining all relevant components of the Earth, namely

1 the atmosphere, oceans, land, cryosphere, and bio-
2 sphere.

3 (4) FIRE ENVIRONMENT.—The term “fire envi-
4 ronment” means—

5 (A) the environmental conditions, such as
6 soil moisture, vegetation, topography, snowpack,
7 atmospheric temperature, moisture, and wind,
8 that influence—

9 (i) fuel and fire behavior; and

10 (ii) the emission, chemical evolution,
11 and transport of wildfire smoke; and

12 (B) the associated environmental impacts
13 occurring during and after fire events.

14 (5) FIRE WEATHER.—The term “fire weather”
15 means the weather conditions that influence the
16 start, spread, character, or behavior of wildfires and
17 relevant meteorological and chemical phenomena, in-
18 cluding air quality, wildfire smoke, and meteorolog-
19 ical parameters such as relative humidity, air tem-
20 perature, wind speed and direction, and atmospheric
21 composition and chemistry, including emissions and
22 mixing heights.

23 (6) IMPACT-BASED DECISION SUPPORT SERV-
24 ICES.—The term “impact-based decision support
25 services” means scientific advice and interpretative

1 services the Administration provides to help core
2 partners, such as emergency personnel and public
3 safety officials, make decisions when the information
4 impacts the lives and livelihoods of the people of the
5 United States.

6 (7) INDIAN TRIBE.—The term “Indian tribe”
7 has the meaning given that term in section 4 of the
8 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance
9 Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

10 (8) NATIVE HAWAIIAN ORGANIZATION.—The
11 term “Native Hawaiian organization” has the mean-
12 ing given that term in section 6207 of the Elemen-
13 tary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20
14 U.S.C. 7517), including the Department of Hawai-
15 ian Home Lands and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs.

16 (9) SEASONAL.—The term “seasonal” has the
17 meaning given that term in section 2 of the Weather
18 Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017
19 (15 U.S.C. 8501).

20 (10) STATE.—The term “State” means a State,
21 the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of
22 Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Common-
23 wealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the United
24 State Virgin Islands, the Federated States of Micro-

1 nesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the
2 Republic of Palau.

3 (11) TRIBAL ORGANIZATION.—The term “Trib-
4 al organization” has the meaning given that term in
5 section 4 of the Indian Self-Determination and Edu-
6 cation Assistance Act (25 U.S.C. 5304).

7 (12) UNDER SECRETARY.—The term “Under
8 Secretary” means the Under Secretary of Commerce
9 for Oceans and Atmosphere.

10 **SEC. 3. ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRE WEATHER SERVICES**
11 **PROGRAM.**

12 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall estab-
13 lish and maintain a coordinated fire weather services pro-
14 gram among the offices of the Administration in existence
15 as of the date of the enactment of this Act.

16 (b) PROGRAM FUNCTIONS.—The functions of the
17 program established under subsection (a), consistent with
18 the priorities described in section 101 of the Weather Re-
19 search and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C.
20 8511), shall be—

21 (1) to support readiness, responsiveness, under-
22 standing, and resilience of the United States to
23 wildfires, fire weather, wildfire smoke, post-fire
24 flooding and debris flows, and associated hazards
25 and impacts in built and natural environments;

1 (2) to collaboratively develop and disseminate
2 accurate, precise, effective, and timely risk commu-
3 nications, forecasts, watches, and warnings relating
4 to wildfires, fire weather, wildfire smoke, post-fire
5 flooding and debris flows, and other associated con-
6 ditions, hazards, and impacts, as applicable, with
7 Federal land management agencies;

8 (3) to partner with and support the public,
9 Federal and State government entities, Indian
10 tribes, Native Hawaiian organizations, and academic
11 and local partners through the development of capa-
12 bilities, impact-based decision support services, and
13 overall service delivery and utility related to fire
14 weather;

15 (4) to conduct and support research and devel-
16 opment of new and innovative models, technologies,
17 techniques, products, systems, processes, and proce-
18 dures to predict and improve understanding of
19 wildfires, fire weather, related air quality, post-fire
20 flooding and debris flows, and the fire environment;

21 (5) to develop processes to transition research
22 into operational use and inform additional areas of
23 research to deliver fire weather products, services,
24 and decision support tools to operational users and
25 platforms;

1 (6) to develop communications networks and
2 strategies to ensure parity of fire forecasts, warning
3 services, and information about current fire location,
4 for remote, isolated, and rural communities, includ-
5 ing communities where the public acts as the first
6 responder to wildfire; and

7 (7) to develop, in coordination with Federal
8 land management agencies, impact-based decision
9 support services that operationalize and integrate
10 the functions described in paragraphs (1) through
11 (6) in order to provide comprehensive impact-based
12 decision support services that encompass the fire en-
13 vironment.

14 (c) PROGRAM PRIORITIES.—In developing and imple-
15 menting the program established under subsection (a), the
16 Under Secretary shall prioritize—

17 (1) development of a fire weather-enabled Earth
18 system model and data assimilation systems that—

19 (A) are capable of prediction and fore-
20 casting across relevant spatial and temporal
21 scales;

22 (B) include variables associated with fire
23 weather and the fire environment;

1 (C) improve understanding of the connec-
2 tions between fire weather and modes of climate
3 variability;

4 (D) incorporate emerging techniques such
5 as artificial intelligence, machine learning, and
6 cloud computing; and

7 (E) use a rapidly deployable network of
8 rain gauges for post-fire hazard monitoring;

9 (2) advancement of existing and new observa-
10 tional capabilities, including satellite-, airborne-, air-
11 , and ground-based systems and technologies, and
12 social networking and other public information-gath-
13 ering applications that—

14 (A) identify—

15 (i) high-risk pre-ignition conditions;

16 (ii) conditions that influence fire be-
17 havior and spread including those condi-
18 tions that suppress active fire events; and

19 (iii) fire weather threat levels;

20 (B) support real-time notification and
21 monitoring of ignitions;

22 (C) support observations and data collec-
23 tion of fire weather and fire environment vari-
24 ables, including vegetation state and profiles of
25 wildfire smoke, winds, temperature, and humid-

1 ity, for development of the model and systems
2 under paragraph (1); and

3 (D) support forecasts and research that
4 mitigate the impacts of wildfires on human life,
5 health, and the economy;

6 (3) development and implementation of ad-
7 vanced and user-oriented impact-based decision
8 tools, science, and technologies that—

9 (A) ensure real-time and retrospective
10 data, products, and services are findable, acces-
11 sible, interoperable, usable, inform further re-
12 search, and are analysis- and decision-ready;

13 (B) provide targeted information through-
14 out the fire lifecycle including pre-ignition, de-
15 tection, forecasting, post-fire, and monitoring
16 phases; and

17 (C) support early assessment of post-fire
18 hazards, such as air quality, debris flows,
19 mudslides, and flooding; and

20 (4) ensuring the parity of access to and support
21 from the tools, science, and technologies developed
22 under this subsection for remote, isolated, and rural
23 communities.

1 (d) PROGRAM ACTIVITIES.—In developing and imple-
2 menting the program established under subsection (a), the
3 Under Secretary may—

4 (1) conduct relevant physical and social science
5 research activities in support of the functions de-
6 scribed in subsection (b) and the priorities described
7 in subsection (c);

8 (2) conduct relevant activities, in coordination
9 with Federal land management agencies and Federal
10 science agencies, to assess fuel characteristics, in-
11 cluding moisture, loading, and other parameters
12 used to determine fire risk levels and outlooks;

13 (3) support and conduct research that assesses
14 impacts to marine, riverine, watershed, and other
15 relevant ecosystems, which may include forest and
16 rangeland ecosystems, resulting from activities asso-
17 ciated with mitigation of and response to wildfires;

18 (4) support and conduct attribution science re-
19 search relating to wildfires, fire weather, fire risk,
20 wildfire smoke, and associated conditions, risks, and
21 impacts;

22 (5) develop wildfire smoke and air quality fore-
23 casts, forecast guidance, and prescribed burn weath-
24 er forecasts, and conduct research on the impact of

1 such forecasts on response behavior that minimizes
2 health-related impacts from wildfire smoke exposure;

3 (6) use, in coordination with Federal land man-
4 agement agencies, wildland fuels information and
5 fire resource intelligence to inform fire environment
6 impact-based decision support services and products
7 for safety;

8 (7) work with Federal agencies to provide data,
9 tools, and services to support the implementation of
10 mitigation measures by such agencies;

11 (8) provide training and support to ensure ef-
12 fective media utilization of impact-based decision
13 support services and products to the public regard-
14 ing actions needing to be taken;

15 (9) provide comprehensive training to ensure
16 staff of the program established under subsection
17 (a) is properly equipped to deliver the impact-based
18 decision support services and products described in
19 paragraphs (1) through (6); and

20 (10) acquire, through contracted purchase, pri-
21 vate sector-produced observational data to fill identi-
22 fied gaps, as needed.

23 (e) PARITY FOR REMOTE, ISOLATED, AND RURAL
24 COMMUNITIES.—In developing and implementing the pro-
25 gram established under subsection (a), the Under Sec-

1 retary shall ensure parity of coverage and programmatic
2 activity for remote, isolated, and rural communities, in-
3 cluding communities where the public acts as the first re-
4 sponder to wildfire.

5 (f) COLLABORATION.—The Under Secretary shall, as
6 the Under Secretary considers appropriate, collaborate
7 with partners in the weather and climate enterprises, aca-
8 demic institutions, States, Indian tribes, Tribal organiza-
9 tions, Native Hawaiian organizations, local partners, and
10 Federal agencies in the development and implementation
11 of the program established under subsection (a).

12 (g) AGREEMENTS.—In carrying out the activities
13 under this Act and the amendments made by this Act,
14 the Under Secretary may provide support to non-Federal
15 entities by making funds and resources available
16 through—

17 (1) competitive grants;

18 (2) contracts under the mobility program under
19 subchapter VI of chapter 33 of title 5, United States
20 Code (commonly referred to as the “Intergovern-
21 mental Personnel Act Mobility Program”);

22 (3) cooperative agreements; and

23 (4) co-location agreements as described in sec-
24 tion 502 of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric

1 Administration Commissioned Officer Corps Amend-
2 ments Act of 2020 (33 U.S.C. 851 note prec.).

3 (h) PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION PLAN.—

4 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
5 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
6 Under Secretary shall submit to the appropriate
7 committees of Congress a plan that details how the
8 program established under subsection (a) will be ad-
9 ministered and governed within the Administration.

10 (2) ELEMENTS.—The plan required by para-
11 graph (1) should include a description of—

12 (A) how the functions described in sub-
13 section (b), the priorities described in sub-
14 section (c), and the activities described in sub-
15 section (d) will be distributed among the line of-
16 fices of the Administration; and

17 (B) the mechanisms in place to ensure
18 seamless coordination among those offices.

19 **SEC. 4. FIRE WEATHER TESTBED.**

20 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF FIRE WEATHER
21 TESTBED.—The Under Secretary shall establish a fire
22 weather testbed that enables engagement across the Fed-
23 eral Government, State and local governments, academia,
24 private and federally funded research laboratories, the pri-
25 vate sector, and end-users in order to evaluate the accu-

1 racy and usability of technology, models, fire weather
2 products and services, and other research to accelerate the
3 implementation, transition to operations, and use of new
4 capabilities by the Administration, Federal and land man-
5 agement agencies, and other relevant stakeholders.

6 (b) UNCREWED SYSTEMS.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall—

8 (A) establish and carry out a research and
9 development program to support the application
10 of uncrewed systems technologies to improve
11 data collection in support of modeling, observa-
12 tions, predictions, forecasts, and impact-based
13 decision support services, and for other pur-
14 poses of the Administration;

15 (B) transition uncrewed systems tech-
16 nologies from research to operations as the
17 Under Secretary considers appropriate; and

18 (C) coordinate with other Federal agencies
19 that may be developing uncrewed systems and
20 related technologies to meet the challenges of
21 wildland fire management.

22 (2) PILOTS REQUIRED.—In carrying out para-
23 graph (1), the Under Secretary shall conduct pilots
24 of uncrewed systems for fire weather and fire envi-
25 ronment observations, including—

1 (A) testing of uncrewed systems in ap-
2 proximations of real-world scenarios;

3 (B) assessment of the utility of meteorolo-
4 gical data collected from fire response and as-
5 sessment aircraft;

6 (C) input of the collected data into appro-
7 priate models to predict fire behavior, including
8 coupled atmosphere and fire models; and

9 (D) collection of best management prac-
10 tices for deployment of uncrewed systems and
11 other remote data technology, including for
12 communication and coordination between the
13 stakeholders described in subsection (a).

14 (3) SAVINGS CLAUSE.—

15 (A) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out activi-
16 ties under this subsection, the Under Secretary
17 shall ensure that any testing or deployment of
18 uncrewed systems follow procedures, restric-
19 tions, and protocols established by the heads of
20 the Federal agencies with statutory or regu-
21 latory jurisdiction over any airspace in which
22 wildfire response activities are conducted during
23 an active wildfire event.

24 (B) CONSULTATION AND COORDINA-
25 TION.—The Under Secretary shall consult and

1 coordinate with relevant Federal land manage-
2 ment agencies, Federal science agencies, and
3 the Federal Aviation Administration to develop
4 processes for the appropriate deployment of the
5 systems described in subparagraph (A).

6 (c) ADDITIONAL PILOT PROJECTS.—The Under Sec-
7 retary shall establish additional pilot projects relating to
8 the fire weather testbed that may include the following ele-
9 ments:

10 (1) Advanced products to detect fire from sat-
11 ellites.

12 (2) Procurement and use of commercial data.

13 (3) Investigation and evaluation of information
14 needs of users and decision makers.

15 (d) REPORT.—Section 108(a)(5) of the National Oce-
16 anic and Atmospheric Administration Authorization Act
17 of 1992 (15 U.S.C. 8520(a)(5)) is amended—

18 (1) in subparagraph (C), by adding “and” at
19 the end; and

20 (2) in subparagraph (D)—

21 (A) in clause (ii), by striking “and”;

22 (B) in clause (iii), by adding “and” at the
23 end; and

24 (C) by adding at the end the following:

1 “(iv) a description of the research
 2 that has been transitioned into operations,
 3 including research at the fire weather
 4 testbed established under section 4(a) of
 5 the Fire Ready Nation Act of 2025;”.

6 **SEC. 5. DATA MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY MOD-**
 7 **ERNIZATION.**

8 (a) DATA AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT.—Sec-
 9 tion 301 of the Weather Research and Forecasting Inno-
 10 vation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8531) is amended—

11 (1) by redesignating subsections (f) and (g) as
 12 subsections (g) and (h), respectively; and

13 (2) by inserting after subsection (e) the fol-
 14 lowing:

15 “(f) DATA AVAILABILITY AND MANAGEMENT.—

16 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary
 17 shall—

18 “(A) make data and metadata generated
 19 or collected by the National Oceanic and At-
 20 mospheric Administration that the Under Sec-
 21 retary has the legal right to redistribute fully
 22 and openly available, in accordance with chap-
 23 ter 35 of title 44, United States Code, and the
 24 Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking
 25 Act of 2018 (Public Law 115–435; 132 Stat.

1 5529) and the amendments made by that Act,
2 and preserve and curate such data and
3 metadata, in accordance with chapter 31 of title
4 44, United States Code (commonly known as
5 the ‘Federal Records Act of 1950’), in order to
6 maximize use of such data and metadata; and

7 “(B) manage and steward the access, ar-
8 chival, and retrieval activities for the data and
9 metadata described in subparagraph (A) by—

10 “(i) using—

11 “(I) enterprise-wide infrastruc-
12 ture, emerging technologies, commer-
13 cial partnerships, and the skilled
14 workforce needed to provide appro-
15 priate data management from collec-
16 tion to broad access; and

17 “(II) associated information serv-
18 ices; and

19 “(ii) pursuing the maximum inter-
20 operability of data and information by—

21 “(I) leveraging data, information,
22 knowledge, and tools from across the
23 Federal Government to support equi-
24 table access, cross-sectoral collabora-

1 tion and innovation, and local plan-
2 ning and decision-making; and

3 “(II) developing standards and
4 practices for the adoption and citation
5 of digital object identifiers for
6 datasets, models, and analytical tools.

7 “(2) COLLABORATION.—In carrying out this
8 subsection, the Under Secretary shall collaborate
9 with such Federal partners and stakeholders as the
10 Under Secretary considers relevant—

11 “(A) to develop standards to pursue max-
12 imum interoperability of data, information,
13 knowledge, and tools across the Federal Gov-
14 ernment, convert historical records into com-
15 mon digital formats, and improve access and
16 usability of data by partners and stakeholders;

17 “(B) to identify and solicit relevant data
18 from Federal and international partners and
19 other relevant stakeholders, as the Under Sec-
20 retary considers appropriate; and

21 “(C) to develop standards and practices for
22 the adoption and citation of digital object iden-
23 tifiers for datasets, models, and analytical
24 tools.”.

1 (b) WILDFIRE TECHNOLOGY MODERNIZATION.—Sec-
2 tion 1114 of the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Man-
3 agement, and Recreation Act (43 U.S.C. 1748b-1) is
4 amended—

5 (1) in subsection (c)(3), by inserting “the Na-
6 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration,”
7 after “Federal Aviation Administration,”;

8 (2) in subsection (e)(2)—

9 (A) by redesignating subparagraph (B) as
10 subparagraph (C); and

11 (B) by inserting after subparagraph (A)
12 the following:

13 “(B) CONSULTATION.—

14 “(i) IN GENERAL.—In carrying out
15 subparagraph (A), the Secretaries shall
16 consult with the Under Secretary of Com-
17 merce for Oceans and Atmosphere regard-
18 ing any development of impact-based deci-
19 sion support services that relate to wild-
20 fire-related activities of the National Oce-
21 anic and Atmospheric Administration.

22 “(ii) DEFINITION OF IMPACT-BASED
23 DECISION SUPPORT SERVICES.—In this
24 subparagraph, the term ‘impact-based deci-
25 sion support services’ means scientific ad-

1 vice and interpretative services the Na-
2 tional Oceanic and Atmospheric Adminis-
3 tration provides to help core partners, such
4 as emergency personnel and public safety
5 officials, make decisions when the informa-
6 tion impacts the lives and livelihoods of the
7 people of the United States.”; and

8 (3) in subsection (f)—

9 (A) by redesignating paragraphs (1) and
10 (2) as subparagraphs (A) and (B), respectively,
11 and moving such subparagraphs, as so redesign-
12 ated, 2 ems to the right;

13 (B) by striking “The Secretaries” and in-
14 serting the following:

15 “(1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretaries”; and

16 (C) by adding at the end the following:

17 “(2) COLLABORATION.—In carrying out para-
18 graph (1), the Secretaries shall collaborate with the
19 Under Secretary of Commerce for Oceans and At-
20 mosphere to improve coordination, utility of systems
21 and assets, and interoperability of data for wildfire
22 smoke prediction, forecasting, and modeling.”.

23 (c) DIGITAL PRESENCE.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall
25 develop and maintain a comprehensive, centralized,

1 and publicly accessible digital presence designed to
2 promote findability, accessibility, interoperability,
3 usability, and utility of the services, tools, data, and
4 information produced by the program established
5 under section 3(a).

6 (2) DIGITAL PLATFORM AND TOOLS.—In car-
7 rying out paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall
8 seek to ensure the digital platform and tools of the
9 Administration integrate geospatial data, decision
10 support tools, training, and best practices to provide
11 real-time fire weather forecasts and address fire-re-
12 lated issues and needs.

13 (d) HIGH-PERFORMANCE COMPUTING.—

14 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall
15 seek to acquire sufficient high-performance com-
16 puting resources and capacity for research, oper-
17 ations, and data storage in support of the program
18 established under section 3(a).

19 (2) CONSIDERATIONS.—In acquiring high-per-
20 formance computing capacity under paragraph (1),
21 the Under Secretary shall consider requirements
22 needed for—

23 (A) conducting research, development, and
24 testbed experiments;

- 1 (B) the transition of research and testbed
 2 developments into operations;
- 3 (C) sustaining capabilities in operations;
- 4 (D) capabilities existing in other Federal
 5 agencies and the commercial sector; and
- 6 (E) skilled workforce development.

7 **SEC. 6. SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS.**

8 (a) POST-FIRE WEATHER SURVEYS AND ASSESS-
 9 MENTS.—

10 (1) ANNUAL POST-FIRE-WEATHER-SEASON SUR-
 11 VEY AND ASSESSMENT.—

12 (A) IN GENERAL.—During the second win-
 13 ter following the date of the enactment of this
 14 Act, and each year thereafter, the Under Sec-
 15 retary shall conduct a post-fire-weather-season
 16 survey and assessment.

17 (B) ELEMENTS.—After conducting a post-
 18 fire-weather-season survey and assessment
 19 under subparagraph (A), the Under Secretary
 20 shall—

- 21 (i) investigate any gaps in weather
 22 data collected during the assessment;
- 23 (ii) identify and implement strategies
 24 and procedures to improve program serv-
 25 ices and information dissemination;

1 (iii) update systems, processes, strate-
2 gies, and procedures to enhance the effi-
3 ciency and reliability of weather data ob-
4 tained from the assessment;

5 (iv) evaluate the accuracy and efficacy
6 of physical fire weather forecasting infor-
7 mation for each incident included in the
8 survey and assessment; and

9 (v) assess and refine performance
10 measures, as needed.

11 (2) SURVEYS AND ASSESSMENTS FOLLOWING
12 INDIVIDUAL WILDFIRE EVENTS.—The Under Sec-
13 retary may conduct surveys and assessments fol-
14 lowing individual wildfire events as the Under Sec-
15 retary determines necessary.

16 (3) GOAL.—In carrying out activities under this
17 subsection, the Under Secretary shall seek to in-
18 crease the number of post-wildfire community im-
19 pact studies, including by surveying individual and
20 collective responses and incorporating other applica-
21 ble topics of social science research.

22 (4) ANNUAL BRIEFING.—Not less frequently
23 than once each year, the Under Secretary shall join
24 other relevant agencies to provide a briefing to the
25 appropriate committees of Congress that provides—

- 1 (A) an overview of the fire season;
- 2 (B) an outlook for the fire season; and
- 3 (C) fire weather forecasts.

4 (5) COORDINATION.—In conducting any survey
5 or assessment under this subsection, the Under Sec-
6 retary shall coordinate with Federal, State, and local
7 partners, Indian tribes, Native Hawaiian organiza-
8 tions, private entities, and such institutions of high-
9 er education as the Under Secretary considers rel-
10 evant in order to—

11 (A) improve operations and collaboration;
12 and

13 (B) optimize data collection, sharing, inte-
14 gration, assimilation, and dissemination.

15 (6) DATA AVAILABILITY.—The Under Secretary
16 shall make the data and findings obtained from each
17 assessment conducted under this subsection available
18 to the public in an accessible digital format as soon
19 as practicable after conducting the assessment.

20 (7) SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS.—The Under Sec-
21 retary shall make best efforts to incorporate the re-
22 sults and recommendations of each assessment con-
23 ducted under this subsection into the research and
24 development plan and operations of the Administra-
25 tion.

1 (b) JOINT ASSESSMENT AND PLAN FOR AUTOMATED
2 SURFACE OBSERVING SYSTEM.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary, in col-
4 laboration with the Administrator of the Federal
5 Aviation Administration and the Secretary of De-
6 fense, shall—

7 (A) conduct an assessment of resources,
8 personnel, procedures, and activities necessary
9 to maximize the functionality and utility of the
10 automated surface observing system of the
11 United States that identifies—

12 (i) key system upgrades needed to im-
13 prove observation quality and utility for
14 weather forecasting, aviation safety, and
15 other users;

16 (ii) improvements needed in observa-
17 tions within the planetary boundary layer,
18 including mixing height;

19 (iii) improvements needed in public
20 accessibility of observational data;

21 (iv) improvements needed to reduce
22 latency in reporting of observational data;

23 (v) relevant data to be collected for
24 the production of forecasts or forecast
25 guidance relating to atmospheric composi-

1 tion, including particulate and air quality
2 data related to wildfires, and aviation safe-
3 ty;

4 (vi) areas of concern regarding oper-
5 ational continuity and reliability of the sys-
6 tem, which may include needs for on-night
7 staff, particularly in remote and rural
8 areas and areas where system failure
9 would have the greatest negative impact to
10 the community;

11 (vii) stewardship, data handling, data
12 distribution, and product generation needs
13 arising from upgrading and changing the
14 automated surface observation systems;

15 (viii) possible solutions for areas of
16 concern identified under clause (vi), includ-
17 ing with respect to the potential use of
18 backup systems, power and communication
19 system reliability, staffing needs and per-
20 sonnel location, and the acquisition of crit-
21 ical component backups and proper storage
22 location to ensure rapid system repair nec-
23 essary to ensure system operational con-
24 tinuity; and

1 (ix) research, development, and transi-
2 tion to operations needed to develop ad-
3 vanced data collection, quality control, and
4 distribution so that the data are provided
5 to models, users, and decision support sys-
6 tems in a timely manner; and

7 (B) develop and implement a plan that ad-
8 dresses the findings of the assessment con-
9 ducted under subparagraph (A), including by
10 seeking and allocating resources necessary to
11 ensure that system upgrades are standardized
12 across the Administration, the Federal Aviation
13 Administration, and the Department of Defense
14 to the extent practicable.

15 (2) STANDARDIZATION.—Any system standard-
16 ization implemented under paragraph (1)(B) shall
17 not impede activities to upgrade or improve indi-
18 vidual units of the system.

19 (3) REMOTE AUTOMATIC WEATHER STATION
20 COORDINATION.—The Under Secretary, in collabora-
21 tion with relevant Federal agencies and the National
22 Interagency Coordination Center, shall assess and
23 develop cooperative agreements to improve coordina-
24 tion, interoperability standards, operations, and
25 placement of remote automatic weather stations for

1 the purpose of improving utility and coverage of re-
2 mote automatic weather stations, automated surface
3 observation systems, wildfire smoke monitoring plat-
4 forms, and other similar stations and systems for
5 weather and climate operations.

6 (4) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—

7 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 2 years
8 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
9 Under Secretary, in collaboration with the Ad-
10 ministrator of the Federal Aviation Administra-
11 tion and the Secretary of Defense, shall submit
12 to the appropriate committees of Congress a re-
13 port that—

14 (i) details the findings of the assess-
15 ment required by subparagraph (A) of
16 paragraph (1); and

17 (ii) the plan required by subparagraph
18 (B) of such paragraph.

19 (B) ELEMENTS.—The report required by
20 subparagraph (A) shall include a detailed as-
21 sessment of appropriations required—

22 (i) to address the findings of the as-
23 sessment required by subparagraph (A) of
24 paragraph (1); and

1 (ii) to implement the plan required by
2 subparagraph (B) of such paragraph.

3 **SEC. 7. INCIDENT METEOROLOGIST SERVICE.**

4 (a) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Under Secretary shall es-
5 tablish and maintain an Incident Meteorologist Service
6 within the National Weather Service (in this section re-
7 ferred to as the “Service”).

8 (b) INCLUSION OF EXISTING INCIDENT METEOROLO-
9 GISTS.—The Service shall include—

10 (1) the incident meteorologists of the Adminis-
11 tration as of the date of the enactment of this Act;
12 and

13 (2) such incident meteorologists of the Adminis-
14 tration as may be appointed after such date.

15 (c) FUNCTIONS.—The Service shall provide—

16 (1) on-site impact-based decision support serv-
17 ices to Federal, State, and local government emer-
18 gency response agencies, Indian tribes, and Native
19 Hawaiian organizations preceding, during, and fol-
20 lowing significant weather-related events, such as
21 wildland fires, that threaten human life, property, or
22 the economy; and

23 (2) support to Federal, State, and local govern-
24 ment decision makers, partners, and stakeholders,
25 Indian tribes, Tribal organizations, and Native Ha-

1 waiian organizations for seasonal planning and pre-
2 fire mitigation activities.

3 (d) DEPLOYMENT.—The Service shall be deployed—

4 (1) as determined by the Under Secretary; or

5 (2) at the request of the head of another Fed-
6 eral agency and with the approval of the Under Sec-
7 retary.

8 (e) STAFFING AND RESOURCES.—In establishing and
9 maintaining the Service, the Under Secretary shall iden-
10 tify, acquire, and maintain adequate levels of staffing and
11 resources to meet user needs.

12 (f) SUPPORT FOR INCIDENT METEOROLOGISTS.—

13 The Under Secretary shall provide resources, access to
14 real-time fire weather forecasts, training, administrative
15 and logistical support, and access to professional coun-
16 seling or other forms of support as the Under Secretary
17 considers appropriate for the betterment of the emotional
18 and mental health and well-being of incident meteorolo-
19 gists and other employees of the Administration so long
20 as the need for such resources, training, access, or support
21 is due to the response of such employees to high-impact
22 and extreme fire weather events.

23 **SEC. 8. EMERGENCY RESPONSE ACTIVITIES.**

24 (a) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (1) BASIC PAY.—The term “basic pay” includes
2 any applicable locality-based comparability payment
3 under section 5304 of title 5, United States Code,
4 any applicable special rate supplement under section
5 5305 of such title, or any equivalent payment under
6 a similar provision of law.

7 (2) COVERED EMPLOYEE.—The term “covered
8 employee” means an employee of the Department of
9 Commerce, the Department of Agriculture, or the
10 Department of the Interior.

11 (3) COVERED SERVICES.—The term “covered
12 services” means services that are performed by a
13 covered employee while serving—

14 (A) as a wildland firefighter or a fire man-
15 agement response official, including a regional
16 fire director, a deputy regional fire director,
17 and a fire management officer;

18 (B) as an incident meteorologist accom-
19 panying a wildland firefighter crew; or

20 (C) on an incident management team, at
21 the National Interagency Fire Center, at a Geo-
22 graphic Area Coordinating Center, or at an op-
23 erations center.

24 (4) PREMIUM PAY.—The term “premium pay”
25 means premium pay paid under a provision of law

1 described in the matter preceding paragraph (1) of
2 section 5547(a) of title 5, United States Code.

3 (5) RELEVANT CONGRESSIONAL COMMIT-
4 TEES.—The term “relevant congressional commit-
5 tees” means—

6 (A) the Committee on Commerce, Science,
7 and Transportation of the Senate;

8 (B) the Committee on Homeland Security
9 and Governmental Affairs of the Senate;

10 (C) the Committee on Agriculture, Nutri-
11 tion, and Forestry of the Senate;

12 (D) the Committee on Appropriations of
13 the Senate;

14 (E) the Committee on Energy and Natural
15 Resources of the Senate;

16 (F) the Committee on Oversight and Gov-
17 ernment Reform of the House of Representa-
18 tives;

19 (G) the Committee on Natural Resources
20 of the House of Representatives;

21 (H) the Committee on Science, Space, and
22 Technology of the House of Representatives;

23 (I) the Committee on Agriculture of the
24 House of Representative; and

1 (J) the Committee on Appropriations of
2 the House of Representatives.

3 (6) SECRETARY CONCERNED.—The term “Sec-
4 retary concerned” means—

5 (A) the Secretary of Commerce, with re-
6 spect to an employee of the Department of
7 Commerce;

8 (B) the Secretary of Agriculture, with re-
9 spect to an employee of the Department of Ag-
10 riculture; and

11 (C) the Secretary of the Interior, with re-
12 spect to an employee of the Department of the
13 Interior.

14 (b) WAIVER.—

15 (1) IN GENERAL.—Any premium pay received
16 by a covered employee for covered services shall be
17 disregarded in calculating the aggregate of the basic
18 pay and premium pay for the covered employee for
19 purposes of applying the limitation on premium pay
20 under section 5547(a) of title 5, United States Code.

21 (2) CALCULATION OF AGGREGATE PAY.—Any
22 pay that is disregarded under paragraph (1) shall be
23 disregarded in calculating the aggregate pay of the
24 applicable covered employee for purposes of applying

1 the limitation under section 5307 of title 5, United
2 States Code, during calendar year 2025.

3 (3) LIMITATION.—A covered employee may not
4 be paid premium pay under this subsection if, or to
5 the extent that, the aggregate of the basic pay and
6 premium pay (including premium pay for covered
7 services) of the covered employee for a calendar year
8 would exceed the rate of basic pay payable for a po-
9 sition at level II of the Executive Schedule under
10 section 5313 of title 5, United States Code, as in ef-
11 fect at the end of that calendar year.

12 (4) TREATMENT OF ADDITIONAL PREMIUM
13 PAY.—If the application of this subsection results in
14 the payment of additional premium pay to a covered
15 employee of a type that is normally creditable as
16 basic pay for retirement or any other purpose, that
17 additional premium pay shall not be—

18 (A) considered to be basic pay of the cov-
19 ered employee for any purpose; or

20 (B) used in computing a lump-sum pay-
21 ment to the covered employee for accumulated
22 and accrued annual leave under section 5551 or
23 5552 of title 5, United States Code.

1 (5) EFFECTIVE PERIOD.—This subsection shall
2 be in effect during calendar year 2025 and apply to
3 premium pay payable during that year.

4 (c) AMENDMENT.—Section 5542(a)(5) of title 5,
5 United States Code, is amended by inserting “, the De-
6 partment of Commerce,” after “Interior”.

7 (d) PLAN TO ADDRESS NEEDS.—

8 (1) DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION.—
9 Not later than March 30, 2026, the Secretaries re-
10 ferred to in subsection (a)(6), in consultation with
11 the Director of the Office of Management and Budg-
12 et and the Director of the Office of Personnel Man-
13 agement, shall jointly develop and implement a plan
14 that addresses the needs of the Department of Com-
15 merce, the Department of Agriculture, and the De-
16 partment of the Interior, as applicable, to hire, ap-
17 point, promote, or train additional covered employees
18 who carry out covered services such that sufficient
19 covered employees are available throughout each fis-
20 cal year, beginning in fiscal year 2026, without the
21 need for waivers of premium pay limitations.

22 (2) SUBMITTAL.—Not later than 30 days before
23 the date on which the Secretaries implement the
24 plan developed under paragraph (1), the Secretaries

1 shall submit the plan to the relevant congressional
2 committees.

3 (3) LIMITATION.—The plan developed under
4 paragraph (1) shall not be contingent on any Sec-
5 retary receiving amounts appropriated for fiscal
6 years beginning in fiscal year 2026 in amounts
7 greater than amounts appropriated for fiscal year
8 2024.

9 (e) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR HEALTH, SAFE-
10 TY, AND WELL-BEING.—The Secretary concerned shall
11 maintain policies and procedures to promote the health,
12 safety, and well-being of covered employees.

13 **SEC. 9. SUBMISSIONS TO CONGRESS REGARDING THE FIRE**
14 **WEATHER SERVICES PROGRAM, INCIDENT**
15 **METEOROLOGIST WORKFORCE NEEDS, AND**
16 **NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE WORKFORCE**
17 **SUPPORT.**

18 (a) REPORT TO CONGRESS.—Not later than 18
19 months after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
20 Under Secretary shall submit to the appropriate commit-
21 tees of Congress—

22 (1) the plan described in subsection (b);

23 (2) the assessment described in subsection (c);

24 and

25 (3) the assessment described in subsection (d).

1 (b) FIRE WEATHER SERVICES PROGRAM PLAN.—

2 (1) ELEMENTS.—The plan submitted under
3 subsection (a)(1) shall detail—

4 (A) the observational data, modeling re-
5 quirements, ongoing computational needs, re-
6 search, development, and technology transfer
7 activities, data management, skilled-personnel
8 requirements, engagement with relevant Federal
9 emergency and land management agencies and
10 partners, and corresponding research, develop-
11 ment, and operational resources and timelines
12 necessary to achieve the functions described in
13 subsection (b) of section 3 and the priorities de-
14 scribed in subsection (c) of such section; and

15 (B) plans and needs for all other activities
16 and requirements under this Act and the
17 amendments made by this Act.

18 (2) SUBMITTAL OF ANNUAL BUDGET FOR
19 PLAN.—Following completion of the plan submitted
20 under subsection (a)(1), the Under Secretary shall,
21 not less frequently than once each year concurrent
22 with the submission of the budget by the President
23 to Congress under section 1105 of title 31, United
24 States Code, submit to Congress a proposed budget
25 corresponding with the elements detailed in the plan.

1 (c) INCIDENT METEOROLOGIST WORKFORCE NEEDS
2 ASSESSMENT.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall
4 conduct a workforce needs assessment on the cur-
5 rent and future demand for additional incident me-
6 teorologists for wildfires and other high-impact fire
7 weather events.

8 (2) ELEMENTS.—The assessment required by
9 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

10 (A) A description of staffing levels as of
11 the date on which the assessment is submitted
12 under subsection (a)(2) and projected future
13 staffing levels.

14 (B) An assessment of the state of the re-
15 search, development, and operational infrastruc-
16 ture of the National Weather Service as of the
17 date on which the assessment is submitted and
18 future needs of such infrastructure in order to
19 meet current and future demands, including
20 with respect to information technology support
21 and logistical and administrative operations.

22 (3) CONSIDERATIONS.—In conducting the as-
23 sessment required by paragraph (1), the Under Sec-
24 retary shall consider user needs and feedback from
25 relevant stakeholders.

1 (d) SUPPORT SERVICES ASSESSMENT.—

2 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall
3 conduct a workforce support services assessment
4 with respect to employees of the National Weather
5 Service engaged in emergency response.

6 (2) ELEMENTS.—The assessment required by
7 paragraph (1) shall include the following:

8 (A) An assessment of need for further sup-
9 port of employees of the National Weather
10 Service engaged in emergency response through
11 services provided by the Public Health Service.

12 (B) A detailed assessment of appropria-
13 tions required to secure the level of support
14 services needed as identified in the assessment
15 described in subparagraph (A).

16 (3) ADDITIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES.—Fol-
17 lowing the completion of the assessment required by
18 paragraph (1), the Under Secretary shall seek to ac-
19 quire additional support services to meet the needs
20 identified in the assessment.

21 **SEC. 10. FIRE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING**
22 **GROUP; STRATEGIC PLAN.**

23 (a) FIRE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY WORKING
24 GROUP.—

1 (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—Not later than 90 days
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Ex-
3 ecutive Director of the Interagency Committee for
4 Advancing Weather Services established under sec-
5 tion 402 of the Weather Research and Forecasting
6 Innovation Act of 2017 (15 U.S.C. 8542) (in this
7 section referred to as the “Interagency Committee”)
8 shall establish a working group, to be known as the
9 “Fire Science and Technology Working Group” (in
10 this section referred to as the “Working Group”).

11 (2) CHAIR.—The Working Group shall be
12 chaired by the Under Secretary, or designee.

13 (3) GENERAL DUTIES.—

14 (A) IN GENERAL.—The Working Group
15 shall seek to build efficiencies among the agen-
16 cies listed under section 12(e)(1) and coordinate
17 the planning and management of science, re-
18 search, technology, and operations related to
19 science and support services for wildland fire
20 prediction, detection, forecasting, modeling, re-
21 siliance, response, management, and assess-
22 ments.

23 (B) INPUT.—The Working Group shall so-
24 licit input from non-Federal stakeholders.

25 (b) STRATEGIC PLAN.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 18 months
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
3 Interagency Committee shall prepare and submit to
4 Congress a strategic plan for interagency coordina-
5 tion, research, and development that will improve
6 the assessment of fire environments and the under-
7 standing and prediction of wildland fires, associated
8 wildfire smoke, and the impacts of such fires and
9 smoke, including—

10 (A) on communities, buildings, and other
11 infrastructure;

12 (B) on ecosystem services and watersheds;

13 (C) social and economic impacts;

14 (D) by developing and encouraging the
15 adoption of science-based and cost-effective
16 measures—

17 (i) to enhance community resilience to
18 wildland fires;

19 (ii) to address and mitigate the im-
20 pacts of wildland fires and associated wild-
21 fire smoke; and

22 (iii) to restore natural fire regimes in
23 fire-dependent ecosystems;

24 (E) by improving the understanding and
25 mitigation of the effects of weather and long-

1 term drought on wildland fire risk, frequency,
2 and severity;

3 (F) through integrations of social and be-
4 havioral sciences in public safety fire commu-
5 nication;

6 (G) by improving the forecasting and un-
7 derstanding of prescribed fires and the impacts
8 of such fires, and how those impacts may differ
9 from impacts of wildland fires that originate
10 from an unplanned ignition; and

11 (H) consideration and adoption of any rec-
12 ommendations included in the report required
13 by section 12(c).

14 (2) PLAN ELEMENTS.—The strategic plan re-
15 quired by paragraph (1) shall include the following:

16 (A) A description of the priorities and
17 needs of vulnerable populations.

18 (B) A description of high-performance
19 computing, visualization, and dissemination
20 needs.

21 (C) A timeline and guidance for implemen-
22 tation of—

23 (i) an interagency data sharing sys-
24 tem for data relevant to performing fire

1 assessments and modeling fire risk and fire
2 behavior;

3 (ii) a system for ensuring that the fire
4 prediction models of relevant agencies can
5 be interconnected; and

6 (iii) to the maximum extent prac-
7 ticable, any recommendations included in
8 the report required by section 12(c).

9 (D) A plan for incorporating and coordi-
10 nating research and operational observations,
11 including from infrared technologies, micro-
12 wave, radars, satellites, mobile weather stations,
13 and uncrewed aerial systems.

14 (E) A flexible framework to communicate
15 clear and simple fire event information to the
16 public.

17 (F) Integration of social, behavioral, risk,
18 and communication research to improve the fire
19 operational environment and societal informa-
20 tion reception and response.

21 (c) SUNSET.—The Working Group shall terminate
22 not later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of
23 this Act.

1 **SEC. 11. FIRE WEATHER RATING SYSTEM.**

2 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall, in col-
3 laboration with the Chief of the United States Forest
4 Service, the Director of the United States Geological Sur-
5 vey, the Director of the National Park Service, the Admin-
6 istrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency,
7 the Director of the United States Fish and Wildlife Serv-
8 ice, the Director of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the Di-
9 rector of the Bureau of Land Management, and such
10 stakeholders as the Under Secretary considers appro-
11 priate—

12 (1) evaluate the system used as of the date of
13 the enactment of this Act to rate the risk of wildfire;
14 and

15 (2) determine whether updates to that system
16 are required to ensure that the ratings accurately re-
17 flect the severity of fire risk.

18 (b) UPDATE REQUIRED.—If the Under Secretary de-
19 termines under subsection (a) that updates to the system
20 described in paragraph (1) of such subsection are nec-
21 essary, the Under Secretary shall update that system.

22 **SEC. 12. GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY OFFICE RE-**
23 **PORTS.**

24 (a) REPORT ON FIRE WEATHER SERVICES PRO-
25 GRAM.—

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 3 years after
2 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Comp-
3 troller General of the United States shall submit to
4 Congress a report on the program established under
5 section 3(a).

6 (2) ELEMENTS.—The report required by para-
7 graph (1) shall—

8 (A) evaluate the performance of the pro-
9 gram by establishing initial baseline capabilities
10 and tracking progress made toward fully
11 operationalizing the functions described in sec-
12 tion 3(b); and

13 (B) include such other recommendations as
14 the Comptroller General determines are appro-
15 priate to improve the program.

16 (b) REPORT ON INTERAGENCY BODIES FOR WILD-
17 FIRE FORECASTING, PREVENTION, PLANNING, AND MAN-
18 AGEMENT.—Not later than 1 year after the date of the
19 enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the
20 United States shall submit to Congress a report that—

21 (1) identifies all Federal interagency bodies es-
22 tablished for the purpose of wildfire forecasting, pre-
23 vention, planning, and management (such as wildfire
24 councils, commissions, and workgroups), including—

25 (A) the Wildland Fire Leadership Council;

1 (B) the White House Wildfire Resilience
2 Interagency Group;

3 (C) the Wildland Fire Management Policy
4 Committee;

5 (D) the Wildland Fire Mitigation and
6 Management Commission;

7 (E) the Joint Science Fire Program;

8 (F) the National Interagency Coordination
9 Center;

10 (G) the National Predictive Services Over-
11 sight Group;

12 (H) the Interagency Council for Advancing
13 Meteorological Services;

14 (I) the National Wildfire Coordinating
15 Group;

16 (J) the National Multi-Agency Coordi-
17 nating Group; and

18 (K) the Mitigation Framework Leadership
19 Group;

20 (2) evaluates the roles, functionality, and utility
21 of such interagency bodies;

22 (3) evaluates the progress, performance, and
23 implementation of such interagency bodies;

24 (4) assesses efficacy and identifies potential
25 overlap and duplication of such interagency bodies in

1 carrying out interagency collaboration with respect
2 to wildfire prevention, planning, and management;
3 and

4 (5) includes such other recommendations as the
5 Comptroller General determines are appropriate to
6 streamline and improve wildfire forecasting, preven-
7 tion, planning, and management, including rec-
8 ommendations regarding the interagency bodies for
9 which the addition of the Administration is nec-
10 essary to improve wildfire forecasting, prevention,
11 planning, and management.

12 (c) REPORT ON INTERAGENCY COORDINATION.—Not
13 later than 1 year after the date of the enactment of this
14 Act, the Comptroller General of the United States shall
15 submit to Congress a report that identifies—

16 (1) the authorities, roles, and science and sup-
17 port services relating to wildland fire prediction, de-
18 tection, forecasting, modeling, resilience, response,
19 management, and assessment provided by—

20 (A) the Department of Commerce, includ-
21 ing the Administration and the National Insti-
22 tute of Standards and Technology;

23 (B) the National Aeronautics and Space
24 Administration;

25 (C) the Department of the Interior;

- 1 (D) the Department of Agriculture;
2 (E) the National Science Foundation;
3 (F) the Department of Energy;
4 (G) the Federal Emergency Management
5 Agency;
6 (H) the Department of Transportation;
7 (I) the Environmental Protection Agency;
8 and
9 (J) the Department of Defense; and

10 (2) recommended areas in and mechanisms by
11 which the agencies listed under paragraph (1) could
12 support and improve—

13 (A) coordination between Federal agencies,
14 State and local governments, Indian tribes,
15 Tribal organizations, Native Hawaiian organi-
16 zations, and other relevant stakeholders, includ-
17 ing through examination of possible public-pri-
18 vate partnerships;

19 (B) research and development, including
20 interdisciplinary research, related to fire envi-
21 ronments, wildland fires, associated wildfire
22 smoke, and the impacts of such environments,
23 fires, and smoke, in furtherance of a coordi-
24 nated interagency effort to address wildland fire
25 risk reduction;

1 (C) data management and stewardship, the
2 development and coordination of data systems
3 and computational tools, and the creation of a
4 centralized, integrated data collaboration envi-
5 ronment for agency data, including historical
6 data, relating to weather, fire environments,
7 wildland fires, associated wildfire smoke, and
8 the impacts of such environments, fires, and
9 smoke, and the assessment of wildland fire risk
10 mitigation measures;

11 (D) interoperability, usability, and accessi-
12 bility of the scientific data, data systems, and
13 computational and information tools of the
14 agencies listed under paragraph (1);

15 (E) coordinated public safety communica-
16 tions relating to fire weather events, fire haz-
17 ards, and wildland fire and smoke risk reduc-
18 tion strategies; and

19 (F) secure and accurate real-time data,
20 alerts, and advisories to wildland firefighters
21 and other decision support tools for wildland
22 fire incident command posts.

23 (d) REPORT ON AUTOMATED SURFACE OBSERVING
24 SYSTEM.—Not later than 4 years after the date of the

1 enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of the
2 United States shall submit to Congress a report that—

3 (1) evaluates the functionality, utility, reli-
4 ability, and operational status of the automated sur-
5 face observing system across the Administration, the
6 Federal Aviation Administration, and the Depart-
7 ment of Defense;

8 (2) evaluates the progress, performance, and
9 implementation of the plan required by section
10 6(b)(1)(B);

11 (3) assesses the efficacy of cross-agency collabo-
12 ration and stakeholder engagement in carrying out
13 the plan and provides recommendations to improve
14 such activities;

15 (4) evaluates the operational continuity and re-
16 liability of the system, particularly in remote and
17 rural areas and areas where system failure would
18 have the greatest negative impact to the community,
19 and provides recommendations to improve such con-
20 tinuity and reliability;

21 (5) assesses Federal coordination regarding the
22 remote automatic weather station network, air re-
23 source advisors, and other Federal observing assets
24 used for weather and climate modeling and response

1 activities, and provides recommendations for im-
2 provements; and

3 (6) includes such other recommendations as the
4 Comptroller General determines are appropriate to
5 improve the system.

6 **SEC. 13. COOPERATION AND COORDINATION.**

7 (a) COOPERATION.—Each Federal agency shall co-
8 operate and coordinate with the Under Secretary, as ap-
9 propriate, in carrying out this Act and the amendments
10 made by this Act.

11 (b) COORDINATION.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—In meeting the requirements
13 under this Act and the amendments made by this
14 Act, the Under Secretary shall coordinate, and as
15 appropriate, establish agreements with Federal and
16 external partners to fully use and leverage existing
17 assets, systems, networks, technologies, and sources
18 of data.

19 (2) INCLUSIONS.—Coordination carried out
20 under paragraph (1) shall include coordination
21 with—

22 (A) the agencies represented at the Na-
23 tional Interagency Fire Center;

24 (B) the Predictive Services Program of the
25 National Interagency Coordination Center;

1 (C) the National Wildfire Coordinating
2 Group; and

3 (D) relevant interagency bodies identified
4 in the report required by section 12(b).

5 (3) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out this sub-
6 section, the Under Secretary shall consult with Fed-
7 eral partners including—

8 (A) the National Aeronautics and Space
9 Administration;

10 (B) the Department of the Interior;

11 (C) the Federal Emergency Management
12 Agency;

13 (D) the National Science Foundation;

14 (E) the United States Geological Survey;

15 (F) the Department of Agriculture;

16 (G) the Environmental Protection Agency;

17 (H) the Department of Energy;

18 (I) the Department of Defense;

19 (J) the National Institute of Standards
20 and Technology; and

21 (K) such other departments and agencies
22 as the Under Secretary considers relevant.

23 (c) PROCESS FOR ANNUAL COORDINATION WITH
24 NON-FEDERAL ENTITIES.—Not later than 18 months
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Under

1 Secretary shall develop and submit to the appropriate
2 committees of Congress a process for annual coordination
3 with State and local governments, Indian tribes, Tribal or-
4 ganizations, and Native Hawaiian organizations to assist
5 the development of improved fire weather products and
6 services.

7 (d) INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION.—

8 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary may
9 develop collaborative relationships and agreements
10 with foreign partners and counterparts to address
11 transboundary issues pertaining to wildfires, fire
12 weather, wildfire smoke, air quality, and associated
13 conditions and hazards or other relevant meteorolog-
14 ical phenomena, as appropriate, to facilitate full and
15 open exchange of data and information.

16 (2) CONSULTATION.—In carrying out activities
17 under this subsection, the Under Secretary shall
18 consult with the Department of State and such other
19 Federal partners as the Under Secretary considers
20 relevant.

21 **SEC. 14. GENERAL PROVISIONS.**

22 (a) AVOIDANCE OF DUPLICATION.—

23 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Under Secretary shall
24 ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that ac-
25 tivities carried out under this Act and the amend-

1 ments made by this Act are not duplicative of activi-
2 ties supported by other parts of the Administration
3 or other relevant Federal agencies.

4 (2) COORDINATION.—In carrying out activities
5 under this Act and the amendments made by this
6 Act, the Under Secretary shall coordinate with the
7 Administration and heads of other Federal research
8 agencies—

9 (A) to ensure those activities enhance and
10 complement, but do not constitute unnecessary
11 duplication of, efforts; and

12 (B) to ensure the responsible stewardship
13 of funds.

14 (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
15 may be construed—

16 (1) to satisfy any requirement for government-
17 to-government consultation with Indian tribes; or

18 (2) to affect or modify any treaty or other right
19 of any Indian tribe.

20 **SEC. 15. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.**

21 (a) IN GENERAL.—There are authorized to be appro-
22 priated to the Administration to carry out this Act and
23 the amendments made by this Act—

24 (1) \$15,000,000 for fiscal year 2026;

25 (2) \$20,000,000 for fiscal year 2027;

- 1 (3) \$27,000,000 for fiscal year 2028;
2 (4) \$36,000,000 for fiscal year 2029; and
3 (5) \$50,000,000 for fiscal year 2030.

4 (b) PROHIBITION.—None of the amounts authorized
5 to be appropriated by subsection (a) may be used to un-
6 necessarily duplicate activities funded under title VIII of
7 division D of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act
8 (Public Law 117–58; 135 Stat. 1094).

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