



## Public Lands Foundation

P.O. Box 7226 Arlington, Virginia 22207

August 8, 2025

The Honorable Doug Burgum  
Secretary of the Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20036

Dear Secretary Burgum:

On behalf of the Public Lands Foundation (PLF), I would like to draw your attention to the attached August 5, 2025, letter submitted to U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Brooke Rollins by seven former U.S. Forest Service Chiefs on the subject "Strengthening Wildland Fire Management". In this letter, the Chiefs offer their strong support for improving wildland fire management but express their strong opposition to creating a new wildland fire agency that would separate wildland fire management from the overall mission of the Federal land management agencies. The PLF strongly endorses the Chiefs' letter and encourages you to consider it in the deliberations on improving wildland fire management.

The PLF is a national, non-profit organization, comprised principally of retired Bureau of Land Management employees. The PLF has a unique body of experience, expertise, and knowledge of public land and resource management, including the management of vegetation, of which fire and fuels management is an integral part. Many of our members were wildland firefighters during all or part of their career and some were senior leaders in the interagency fire management system.

All the Federal land management agencies have a common mission to suppress fires, create fire-adapted communities, and build resilient landscapes using vegetation management tools, including prescribed fire. However, each of the land management agencies have broader objectives and statutory mandates for managing the land under their respective stewardship. Separating fire management from the overall land management objectives of the agencies would result in added complexity and have unintended consequences.

Improvements to the interagency wildland fire system can and should be made. The Chiefs, in their letter, point out several actions that can be considered to improve performance. We concur with these recommendations and encourage the Department to consider them.

Thank you for your consideration. The PLF stands ready to help in any way we can. Please contact me if we can be of assistance. My email address is [mrugwell@publicland.org](mailto:mrugwell@publicland.org).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mary Jo Rugwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mary" and last name "Rugwell" being more prominent than the middle name "Jo".

Mary Jo Rugwell

President

Public Lands Foundation

Attachment

Former Forest Service Chiefs' Letter of August 5, 2025