



HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
**NATURAL RESOURCES**  
CHAIRMAN BRUCE WESTERMAN

**To:** Subcommittee on Federal Lands Republican Members  
**From:** Subcommittee on Federal Lands; Aniela Butler and William Kelleher  
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**Date:** Monday, June 23, 2025  
**Subject:** Oversight Hearing on “*Fix Our Forests: Advancing Innovative Technologies to Improve Forest Management and Prevent Wildfires*”

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The Subcommittee on Federal Lands will hold an oversight hearing on “*Fix Our Forests: Advancing Innovative Technologies to Improve Forest Management and Prevent Wildfires*” on **Thursday, June 26, 2025, at 10:00 am. in room 1324 Longworth House Office Building.**

Member offices are requested to notify Will Rodriguez ([Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov](mailto:Will.Rodriguez@mail.house.gov)) by 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, June 25, if their Member intends to participate in the hearing.

## I. KEY MESSAGES

- Innovative technologies empower commonsense wildfire prevention and response capabilities and facilitate proactive land management. This hearing’s exploration of cutting-edge technologies advances President Trump’s recent executive order on commonsense wildfire prevention and response.<sup>1</sup>
- With better data, faster detection, and smarter planning, agencies can treat more acres, lower wildfire severity, and better protect communities.
- Wildfires create fast-moving, complex conditions, and technology must evolve to keep pace. Innovative new tools—like satellites, cameras, artificial intelligence (AI), drones, geospatial and cloud-based software systems, and 5G networks—have the potential to reduce wildfire suppression costs and improve forest management outcomes.
- H.R. 471, the “Fix Our Forests Act,” is key to unleashing new technologies to empower wildland fire response and prevention. The legislation will help reduce fragmentation, encourage better data interoperability, improve coordination on technology with non-federal partners, and advance cutting-edge science and research.

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<sup>1</sup> A Presidential Document by the Executive Office of the President, “Empowering Commonsense Wildfire Prevention and Response,” June 12, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/06/empowering-commonsense-wildfire-prevention-and-response/>.

## II. WITNESSES

- **Dr. Karen Howard**, Director of Science and Technology Assessment, Government Accountability Office, Washington, D.C.
- **Mr. Dan Munsey**, Fire Chief, San Bernardino County Fire Department, San Bernardino, California
- **Mr. Sean Triplett**, Data Integration and Operations Lead, Earth Fire Alliance, Boise, Idaho
- **Ms. Allison Wolff**, Chief Executive Officer, Vibrant Planet, Truckee, California
- **Mr. Tyson Bertone-Riggs**, Founder and Managing Director, Alliance for Wildfire Resilience, Chicago, Illinois [*Minority Witness*]

## III. BACKGROUND

### *Overview*



Infrared satellite imaging of burning buildings in Altadena, California, in January 2025.

**Source:** Maxar Technologies, 2025.

Investing in modern technologies, data, and science can improve commonsense wildfire prevention and response and facilitate more proactive land management. From 2000 to 2024, wildfires have scorched approximately 174 million acres across the United States.<sup>2</sup> During the last five years, wildfires caused more than \$9.9 billion in property damage and claimed 178 lives.<sup>3</sup> From 2019 to 2023, federal agencies spent an average of \$3.0 billion annually on fire suppression.<sup>4</sup> Catching ignitions early is critical to addressing ballooning wildfire suppression

<sup>2</sup> National Interagency Fire Center, “Wildfires and Acres”, <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics/wildfires>.

<sup>3</sup> Bishop, Lindsay, “Wildfire Statistics: Damage, Fatalities, and Insurance Rates”, Value Penguin, June 16, 2025, <https://www.valuepenguin.com/homeowners-insurance/wildfire-statistics>

<sup>4</sup> National Interagency Fire Center, “Suppression Costs”, <https://www.nifc.gov/fire-information/statistics/suppression-costs>.

costs, as the top 2 percent of the U.S. Forest Service’s (USFS) most severe wildfires account for more than 30 percent of the agency’s annual suppression budget.<sup>5</sup> Early detection and other developing technologies can help reduce these costs while protecting lives, property, and ecosystems.

Emerging tools, such as remote sensing, satellite-based early detection systems, AI for predictive modeling, and unmanned aerial vehicles, offer promising new ways to detect, track, and suppress fires before they escalate. At scale, tech-enabled prevention and response measures could potentially save hundreds of billions of dollars in avoided fire suppression costs, infrastructure damage, and community recovery.<sup>6</sup> This underscores a simple truth: an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of recovery. Smart investments in modern wildfire technology, combined with active forest management and proven mitigation practices, are essential to curbing the rising cost and devastation of catastrophic fires. H.R. 471, the “Fix Our Forests Act,” (FOFA) led by House Committee on Natural Resources Chairman Bruce Westerman (R-AR-04) and Representative Scott Peters (D-CA-50), offers bipartisan solutions to accelerate the adoption of new technology among federal land management agencies to modernize forest management activities, detect and respond to fires more quickly and efficiently, and empower community response and protection efforts.<sup>7</sup>

### *The Role of Innovative Technologies in Modern Forest Management and Wildfire Suppression*



The outcomes of a proposed hazardous fuels treatment project, as mapped using a geospatial risk-analysis tool.

**Source:** Vibrant Planet, no date.

<sup>5</sup> U.S. Forest Service, “The Rising Cost of Wildfire Operations,” <https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/2015-Fire-Budget-Report.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> For example, the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation reported that the “2025 Los Angeles wildfires have resulted in significant economic, property, and employment losses, with total property damages estimated between \$28.0 billion and \$53.8 billion.” Impact of 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires and Comparative Study, Institute for Applied Economics, February 2025, <https://laedc.org/wpcms/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/LAEDC-2025-LA-Wildfires-Study.pdf>.

<sup>7</sup> H.R. 471, “Fix Our Forests Act”, 119<sup>th</sup> Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/471>.

New technologies can help reverse dangerous wildfire trends by enabling predictive and responsive analysis, which allows land managers to operate more efficiently and effectively. While the federal government already uses some of these technologies, such as drones and satellites, there are other early-stage innovations or emerging technologies that have not yet been fully implemented at scale. While there is no one-size-fits-all solution for every landscape, a combination of these technologies can lead to better operating efficiencies and healthier, more resilient forests. The following is a non-exhaustive list of prominent technologies and their application to wildland fire:

- *Artificial Intelligence (AI)*: AI has many applications for wildfire response and prevention. These applications include real-time fire forecasting, smart evacuation planning, and firefighter health monitoring. Current AI tools can predict rapid fire progressions, optimize escape routes, and track health data using advanced models and testing.<sup>8</sup> AI can also be used to analyze historical and real-time fire data to inform suppression strategies or help target strategic, proactive fuels treatments.<sup>9</sup>
- *Satellites, Cameras, and Other Wildfire Detection*: Terrestrial cameras provide real-time, ground-level updates on potential wildfire ignitions, while space-based cameras deliver frequent, wide-area views of entire forest landscapes.<sup>10</sup> Infrared and satellite imaging can also, with increasing precision, monitor active fires and dry fuel conditions, track vegetation health, and monitor post-fire impacts.<sup>11</sup> In particular, AI-enabled wildfire detection cameras can detect new wildfire ignitions within minutes, allowing incident commanders to deploy appropriate resources quickly.<sup>12</sup> AI-powered cameras can operate from the ground or be mounted on aircraft or satellites and allow for efficient monitoring of remote backcountry areas and densely populated tracts in the wildland-urban interface (WUI).<sup>13</sup>
- *Drones and Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS)*: Drones can support surveillance and mapping of active fires, monitor treatment areas or fire perimeters, and safely ignite prescribed burns in hard-to-reach terrain.<sup>14</sup> Specifically, drones and UAS allow aerial

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<sup>8</sup> Tam, Wai Cheong et al., “Artificial Intelligence Enabled Smart Firefighting”, National Institute of Standards and Technology, April 19, 2025, [https://www.nist.gov/programs-projects/artificial-intelligence-enabled-smart-firefighting#:~:text=Using%20artificial%20intelligence%20\(AI\)%20and,lives%20and%20reducing%20property%20losses.](https://www.nist.gov/programs-projects/artificial-intelligence-enabled-smart-firefighting#:~:text=Using%20artificial%20intelligence%20(AI)%20and,lives%20and%20reducing%20property%20losses.)

<sup>9</sup> Western Fire Chiefs Association, “New Technology to Fight Wildfires”, March 30, 2023, <https://wfca.com/articles/newtechnology-wildfires/>.

<sup>10</sup> Honary, Ryan, et al., “A Review of Technologies for the Early Detection of Wildfires”, January 31, 2025, <https://asmedigitalcollection.asme.org/openengineering/article/doi/10.1115/1.4067645/1212421>.

<sup>11</sup> Keating-Bitoni, et al., “U.S. Satellite Capabilities for Tracking the Wildfire Lifecycle”, March 11, 2025, <https://crs.gov/Reports/IF12938?source=search>. Chen, Yang et al., “Remote sensing for wildfire monitoring: Insights into burned area, emissions, and fire dynamics”, Department of Earth System Science, University of California, Irvine, June 21, 2024, [https://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322\(24\)00257-4.pdf](https://www.cell.com/one-earth/pdf/S2590-3322(24)00257-4.pdf).

<sup>12</sup> A 15-minute reduction in average response time could generate between \$3.5 billion and \$8.2 billion in economic benefits, and between \$150 million and \$350 million in fiscal benefits for the State of California. These benefits reflect 3–7 percent of the estimated \$117 billion in economic costs and \$5 billion in fiscal costs from California wildfires between 2017 and 2021. See Paci, James, et al., The Economic, Fiscal, and Environmental Costs of Wildfires in California, The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, June 27, 2023, <https://www.moore.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/the-economic-fiscal-and-environmental-costs-of-wildfires-in-ca.pdf>.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.*

<sup>14</sup> Wildfire Today, “Drones are playing an increasingly important role in fighting wildfires”, October 5, 2022, <https://wildfiretoday.com/drones-are-playing-an-increasingly-important-role-in-fighting-wildfires-2/>. Federal Aviation Administration, “UAS in Wildfire Response”, [https://www.faa.gov/uas/public\\_safety\\_gov/uas-wildfire-response](https://www.faa.gov/uas/public_safety_gov/uas-wildfire-response).

monitoring during smoky or nighttime conditions where in-person support is not possible, thus reducing aviation risks, improving firefighter safety, and reducing suppression costs. Autonomous or remote-controlled machines are also capable of retardant drops in high-risk zones to help support on-the-ground fire suppression crews.<sup>15</sup>

- *Dashboards, Geospatial Data, and Other Planning Tools:* Cloud-based dashboards and geospatial tools can offer real-time coordination between federal, state, tribal, and local responders.<sup>16</sup> Agencies can now cooperatively model wildfire risk, identify priority treatment zones, and simulate the impact of mechanical thinning, prescribed fire, and fuel breaks.<sup>17</sup> These technologies can improve environmental planning timelines and enhance cross-boundary coordination to protect homes, watersheds, and critical habitat. Such resources also provide integrated real-time data for incident commanders and interagency teams to coordinate wildfire response and treatment planning.<sup>18</sup> When combined with fire weather forecasting and risk analysis, these tools can also guide resource deployment by modeling wind, fuel moisture, and fire behavior.<sup>19</sup>
- *5G and Communications Technology:* Long Range Wide Area Network (LoRaWAN) and cellular mesh Internet of Things (IoT) networks expand connectivity in remote, fire-prone areas, enabling continuous environmental monitoring through low-power sensors. While there has been modest deployment of this technology, implementation remains challenging due to high deployment costs, technical complexity, and integration hurdles with existing emergency response systems.<sup>20</sup> Expanded, reliable communications capacity is especially critical for first responders and members of the public during active fire incidents.
- *Quantum Sensing:* Emerging research suggests that quantum sensing (i.e., the use of quantum sensors for enhanced perception and measurement) can significantly improve environmental monitoring by enabling real-time, ultra-precise detection of variables like air quality, temperature, and humidity. This has potential applications for wildfire risk detection and forest health monitoring in remote or dynamic conditions.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Western Fire Chiefs Association, “Future of Firefighting Robots”, December 11, 2024, <https://wfca.com/wildfire-articles/firefighting-robots/>.

<sup>16</sup> Careless, James, “AI, 5G, and FirstNet Reauthorization Lead Experts’ Forecasts for 2025”, All Things FirstNet, February 1, 2025, <https://allthingsfirstnet.com/ai-5g-and-firstnet-reauthorization-lead-experts-forecasts-for-2025/>.

<sup>17</sup> See, e.g., Vibrant Planet, “Our Story,” <https://www.vibrantplanet.net/about/our-story>.

<sup>18</sup> Schultz, Anthony, “Real-time Wildfire awareness Emerges from Firefighter Cloud Collaboration”, ESRI, August 22, 2022, <https://www.esri.com/about/newsroom/blog/real-time-wildfire-awareness#:~:text=Some%20firefighters%20spend%20more%20than.the%20status%20of%20a%20fire>.

<sup>19</sup> National Interagency Coordination Center, “Predictive Services”, <https://www.nifc.gov/nicc/predictive-services>.

<sup>20</sup> Berto, Riccardo et al., “A LoRa-Based Mesh Network for Peer-to-Peer Long-Range Communication”, Department of Computer Science, Systems and Communications, University of Milano-Bicocca, June 24, 2021, <https://doi.org/10.3390/s21134314>.

<sup>21</sup> Nirmala, P. et al., “Enhancing Environmental Monitoring through Object Detection in Quantum Networks”, 2024 International Conference on Computing, Power, and Communication Technologies, May 2, 2024, [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/S-Joshua-Kumaresan/publication/379685750\\_Enhancing\\_Environmental\\_Monitoring\\_through\\_Object\\_Detection\\_in\\_Quantum\\_Networks/links/66ab0927c6e41359a84ffb7f/Enhancing-Environmental-Monitoring-through-Object-Detection-in-Quantum-Networks.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/S-Joshua-Kumaresan/publication/379685750_Enhancing_Environmental_Monitoring_through_Object_Detection_in_Quantum_Networks/links/66ab0927c6e41359a84ffb7f/Enhancing-Environmental-Monitoring-through-Object-Detection-in-Quantum-Networks.pdf).

- *Augmented or Virtual Reality*: Augmented reality-equipped helmets and masks can enhance firefighter safety and decision-making by projecting real-time building layouts, hazards, and escape routes into their field of vision. While offering powerful training and situational awareness capabilities, augmented and virtual reality tools remain costly and challenging to integrate into existing workflows.<sup>22</sup>

### *Barriers to Federal Land Managers' Adoption of New Technologies*

Despite their potential, proven and emerging technologies remain underutilized by federal land management agencies. While many state agencies, utility companies, and private landowners are incubating and implementing new technologies, the federal government lags several years behind in testing and deploying new wildfire detection, mitigation, and suppression technologies.<sup>23</sup> Procurement bottlenecks, fragmented federal programs and data systems, data privacy concerns, and bureaucratic inertia all contribute to slow technological adoption at the federal level. This not only increases wildfire suppression costs and a lack of active forest management but can also expand risks for wildland firefighters on the frontlines of fire suppression activities.

There are many barriers to testing, deploying, and adopting new and innovative technologies across the federal government. First, a host of federal agencies and programs are involved in different aspects of wildfire technology, science, and data. This fragmentation means that “current efforts and resources are dispersed, siloed in their operations, challenging to access, and lack overarching structures for coordination or aggregation across relevant disciplines.”<sup>24</sup> Second, data compatibility remains a major barrier, as wildfire detection platforms developed by different public and private entities often lack algorithmic standardization, hindering integration and slowing real-time decision-making.<sup>25</sup> These systems may also require substantial technical expertise to develop and maintain, raising concerns about proprietary knowledge or other data privacy issues. Privacy and data security concerns are also possible when drones and cameras are deployed near residential areas.<sup>26</sup> Finally, dispersed procurement procedures among different federal agencies compound these interoperability issues and lead to unnecessary delays in the “adoption of technologies and data systems across” the federal government.<sup>27</sup>

While slow technological adoption can hamper overall federal wildfire suppression efforts, this issue also disproportionately affects frontline firefighting personnel, who must often rely on outdated technology to perform their duties. In particular, firefighters frequently rely on antiquated communications tools, such as two-way radios and pagers, during life-and-death

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<sup>22</sup> Western Fire Chiefs Association, “Firefighter Virtual Reality & Augmented Reality”, August 27, 2024, <https://wfca.com/preplan-articles/firefighter-vr-ar/>.

<sup>23</sup> Hart, Dan, “The threat from wildfires is growing. The US needs a unified response.”, Atlantic Council, November 13, 2024, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-threat-from-wildfires-is-growing-the-us-needs-a-unified-response/>.

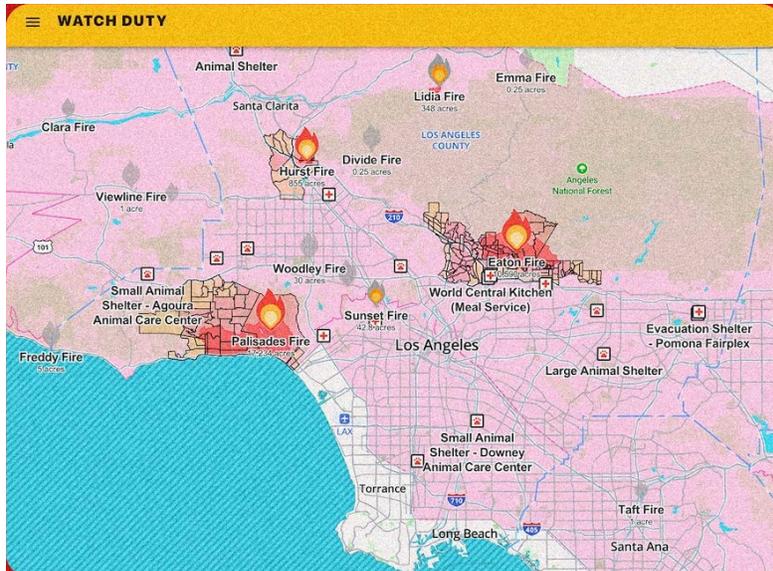
<sup>24</sup> Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission, “ON FIRE: The Report of the Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission,” September 2023, Pg. 25.

<sup>25</sup> GAO, “Science & Tech Spotlight: Wildfire Detection Technologies”, May 2025, GAO-25-108161, <https://www.gao.gov/assets/gao-25-108161.pdf>.

<sup>26</sup> *Id.*

<sup>27</sup> *Id.*

wildfire response operations.<sup>28</sup> Further, despite decades of expressed interest in developing a real-time tracking system for firefighters, the USFS has not deployed GPS or geospatial data capabilities that would reliably meet this objective.<sup>29</sup> USFS conducts world-class fire research and operates predictive services that offer fire weather forecasts, fuel assessments, and intelligence briefings. However, the agency struggles to communicate this data in real time to frontline units, who still rely on outdated systems, fragmented communication, and delayed data.<sup>30</sup> To improve safety and effectiveness, wildland firefighters in the field would benefit from access to modern gear and technology and the most up-to-date data on active wildland fires.



A screenshot of the Watch Duty app during the Los Angeles Fires of January 2025. **Source:** The Washington Post, 2025.

Improved data on active fires would also greatly benefit communities in the WUI. In January 2025, more than 2 million people downloaded the app “Watch Duty” to actively track the Los Angeles Fires and get real-time information on fire size, suppression efforts, and evacuation zones.<sup>31</sup> The app gained popularity after the punctuality, quality—including at least one false alert—and the quantity of alerts from the national alert system fueled public feelings of mistrust in the existing system among local residents.<sup>32</sup> Information on the

Watch Duty app was considered so high-value that many residents reported following evacuation alerts on the app, rather than through official channels.<sup>33</sup> While the Watch Duty app was undoubtedly a success story during the LA fires in terms of getting fast, quality information to local communities, it comparatively highlights the flaws and inadequacies in outdated federal systems. Wildfires involve increasingly fast-changing, complex conditions, requiring technology to evolve quickly to keep pace.

<sup>28</sup> “Radio Cache,” National Interagency Incident Communications Division, National Interagency Fire Center, U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Department of Agriculture, [www.nifc.gov/about-us/what-is-nifc/radio-cache](http://www.nifc.gov/about-us/what-is-nifc/radio-cache).

<sup>29</sup> Gabbert, Bill, “What is the Forest Service doing about tracking firefighters and fires in real time?,” July 2014, *Wildfire Today*, <https://wildfiretoday.com/what-is-the-forest-service-doing-about-tracking-firefighters-and-fires-in-real-time/>.

<sup>30</sup> Kelleher, Jennifer, et al., “Communications breakdown left authorities in the dark and residents without alerts amid Maui fire”, AP News, April 18, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/lahaina-fire-hawaii-report-e07c65633a377135e9163a6ec6aebdb3>.

<sup>31</sup> Mills, John, “LA Times Op-Ed: No one should need the Watch Duty app. As fires near, officials should communicate better,” January 28, 2025, <https://www.watchduty.org/blog/la-times-op-ed-no-one-should-need-the-watch-duty-app-as-fires-near-officials-should-communicate-better>.

<sup>32</sup> Fellows, Kara, “How Watch Duty became an essential app during the Los Angeles wildfires,” CBS News, January 16, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/watch-duty-app-los-angeles-wildfires-warnings-evacuations/>.

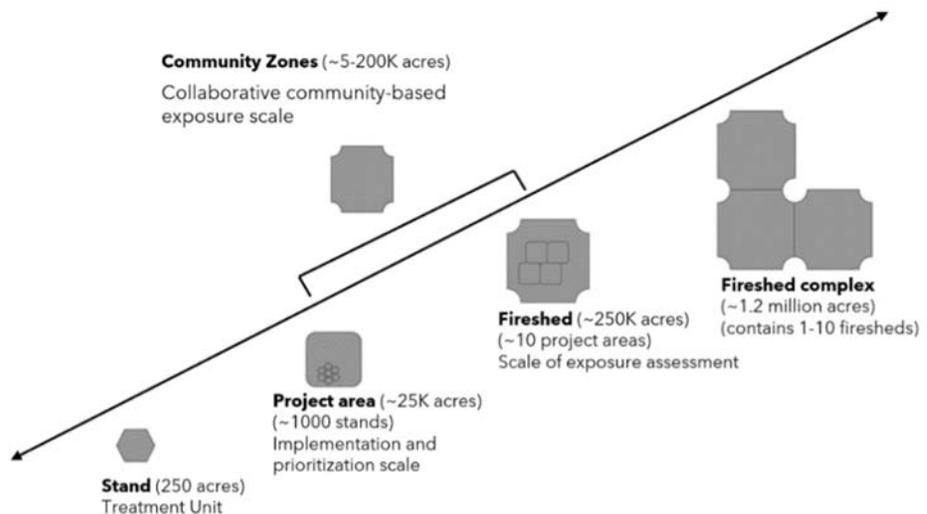
<sup>33</sup> *Id.*

By prioritizing technological advancement, the federal government could catch up to its non-federal and private partners and create incentives to catalyze the adoption of cutting-edge science, data, and technologies. For technologies the federal government already deploys, such as drones, improvements in federal coordination, investment, or policy support could help immediately scale their impact. Federal land managers can pilot emerging technologies, such as AI-empowered cameras or satellites, to demonstrate viability to non-federal partners and establish standards for data integration. Finally, for early-stage innovations, federal support can accelerate development, validation, and transfer into operational use. In any scenario, it is important to avoid “overfitting,” where a model becomes too closely tailored to the specific patterns in the training data and loses its ability to predict outcomes in new or unseen environments accurately.<sup>34</sup> Tools that perform well in California’s chaparral might misidentify risks in the grasslands of the Midwest or the boreal forests of Alaska. By establishing clear regulatory frameworks and procurement pathways, federal agencies can help avoid this issue and effectively evaluate or deploy new technologies.

*Fix Our Forests Act: Advancing Innovative New Technologies*

Innovative technologies are beginning to transform how we manage forests, detect wildfires, and respond to emergencies. These tools range from fully operational systems to promising pilot programs and early-stage research. FOFA recognizes this spectrum and provides flexible authorities to test, evaluate, and deploy a wide array of solutions. FOFA also serves as a bipartisan framework to modernize forest management by enabling the deployment of emerging technologies. This legislation clears the path for agencies to adopt advanced tools that improve coordination, accelerate wildfire mitigation, and scale up forest restoration efforts. These reforms empower land managers to apply the latest science and innovation to protect communities and landscapes more effectively.

The science underpinning FOFA is based on the latest, cutting-edge USFS fireshed technology systems. USFS created fireshed mapping after realizing that community wildfire protection plans were decoupled from landscape-scale



Source: Tania Ellersick and Alan Ager, 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Olawade, David, et al., “Artificial intelligence in environmental monitoring: Advancements, challenges, and future directions”, Hygiene and Environmental Health Advances, Volume 12, December 2024, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2773049224000278>.

efforts to reduce wildland fire risk.<sup>35</sup> This created issues for reducing overall fire risks, as wildfire prevention “is a multiscale, cross-boundary problem that requires spatial planning frameworks to organize location-specific mitigation measures and efficiently allocate finite resources.”<sup>36</sup> After mapping out firesheds, USFS researchers found 71 percent of Bureau of Land Management lands and 89 percent of USFS lands “have the potential for wildfires to ignite and spread to communities.”<sup>37</sup> Through cutting-edge fireshed simulation modeling, this research identified 1,812 communities in the western United States that future wildfires could threaten.<sup>38</sup> Sobering fire models have even predicted plausible extreme fire scenarios in the near future where almost 500,000 buildings could be lost to wildfire in a single fire season.<sup>39</sup> Other scenarios have identified the probability of wildfires igniting on National Forest System lands and burning over 1.5 million acres in southern California, destroying 100,000 structures and putting thousands of lives at risk.<sup>40</sup> To address this, USFS utilized a Scenario Investment Planning Tool, which developed ways to target treatments to control and alleviate fire growth and intensity near at-risk communities.<sup>41</sup> These planning tools, which FOFA codifies and expands, enable strategic treatments over limited areas to reduce the size and severity of wildfires and increase the resiliency of the overall fireshed.

By establishing a Fireshed Center, an interagency hub that integrates predictive fire modeling, satellite data, and decision-support tools, FOFA will encourage innovation and the use of more technology.<sup>42</sup> The Fireshed Center will coordinate technological adoption across agencies, enhance fire weather forecasting, and deploy real-time data to inform landscape-scale treatments. FOFA also directs the center to develop a public dashboard known as the Fireshed Registry, modeled on FAST-41, to increase transparency and track the implementation of hazardous fuels reduction treatments.<sup>43</sup> The Fireshed Center will thus reduce fragmentation, encourage more data interoperability, and support the advancement of innovative breakthroughs that can reduce wildfire risk. FOFA also expands access to public-private technology testbeds for emerging wildfire tools such as AI, unmanned aerial systems, and smart sensors.<sup>44</sup> Finally, the legislation creates a new research program for community wildfire defense to identify innovative technologies around home hardening and community design that make the WUI more fire-resistant.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Alan Ager, et al. “Development and Application of the Fireshed Registry,” USDA Forest Service Rocky Mountain Region, May 2021, [https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs\\_series/rmrs/gtr/rmrs\\_gtr425.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_series/rmrs/gtr/rmrs_gtr425.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> *Id.*

<sup>37</sup> A fireshed is a landscape-scale area that faces similar wildfire threats where a fire management strategy could affect fire outcomes. *Id.*

<sup>38</sup> Ager, Alan, et al. “Cross-Boundary Wildfire and Community Exposure: A Framework and Application in the Western U.S.,” U.S. Forest Service, May 2019, [https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs\\_series/rmrs/gtr/rmrs\\_gtr392.pdf](https://www.fs.usda.gov/rm/pubs_series/rmrs/gtr/rmrs_gtr392.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Finney, MA, et al., A simulation of probabilistic wildfire risk components for the continental United States. Stochastic Environmental Research and Risk Assessment, 2011; 25:973–1000; Short, KC, et al., Spatial datasets of probabilistic wildfire risk components for the United States (270m) 2020, available at <https://doi.org/10.2737/RDS-2016-0034>.

<sup>40</sup> Barclay, Eliza, “This is a worst-possible wildfire scenario for Southern California,” Vox, October 21, 2019, <https://www.vox.com/2019/9/10/20804560/climate-change-california-wildfire-2019>.

<sup>41</sup> Information provided by the Forest Service.

<sup>42</sup> Section 102 of H.R. 471.

<sup>43</sup> Permitting Dashboard Federal Infrastructure Projects, “FAST-41 Covered Projects”, <https://www.permits.performance.gov/projects/fast-41-covered>.

<sup>44</sup> Section 303 of H.R. 471.

<sup>45</sup> Section 202 of H.R. 471.

The House overwhelmingly passed FOFA earlier this year in the wake of the LA fires by a vote of 279-141.<sup>46</sup> On April 10, Senator Curtis (R-UT) introduced similar companion legislation cosponsored by Senators Hickenlooper (D-CO), Sheehy (R-MT), and Padilla (D-CA).<sup>47</sup> The Senate Agriculture Committee has held two legislative hearings on FOFA, one on March 6<sup>th</sup> featuring outside witnesses and one on May 6<sup>th</sup> featuring USFS.<sup>48</sup> The Committee continues to work with the Senate Agriculture Committee to advance FOFA out of the Senate and to the President's desk. More information about FOFA can be found [here](#).

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<sup>46</sup> Roll Call No. 25; <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/202525>.

<sup>47</sup> S. 1462; <https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1462>.

<sup>48</sup> More information on those hearings can be found here: <https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/hearings/legislative-hearing-to-review-hr-471-the-fix-our-forests-act-and-options-to-reduce-catastrophic-wildfire> and <https://www.agriculture.senate.gov/hearings/legislative-hearing-to-review-s-1462-fix-our-forests-act>.