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OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET  
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**Administration Requests FY 2003 Emergency Funds for  
Firefighting, Disaster Response, and NASA**

**Washington, D.C.** – President George W. Bush today submitted to Congress a Fiscal Year 2003 emergency funding request to fight fires, respond to weather-related disasters, and to address unforeseen costs connected with the space shuttle *Columbia* tragedy.

"I hope Congress will approve these emergency funds quickly to deal with the snows of last winter, the tornados of the spring and the fires burning in the West today. There are also disaster funds required for the response to the *Columbia* space shuttle tragedy," said Joshua B. Bolten, Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

**Summary of the President's Emergency Request:**

- **\$1.6 billion**— to anticipate and respond to one of the most costly tornado and hurricane seasons in years and to address unforeseen costs connected with the space shuttle *Columbia* tragedy. According to the World Meteorological Organization, a record 562 tornados hit the United States in May, 2003 and forecasters with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration are predicting a well-above average 11 to 15 tropical storms over the season. Current estimates indicate that the Department of Homeland Security's Disaster Relief Fund could be exhausted by the end of July if the extreme weather continues. The request also includes \$50 million for NASA's collection and reconstruction of the orbiter *Columbia*, computer analyses of potential failure scenarios and impact testing of space shuttle wing components.
- **\$289 million**— for firefighting activity, especially with large sections of the West still vulnerable to wildfires this summer (\$253 million for the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service and \$36 million for the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management). This request brings the total FY 2003 finding available for wildland fire suppression to a level equal to the 10-year average, which includes the severe 2002 fire season.

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