

MAR 25 2011

The Honorable Senator Jack Reed
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Mr. Chairman:

Title V, section 503, of the 2010 Department of the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, cited as the “Federal Land Assistance, Management, and Enhancement Act of 2009” or “FLAME Act of 2009,” directed the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, acting jointly, to submit to Congress a report that contains a cohesive wildfire management strategy, consistent with the recommendations described in recent reports of the Government Accountability Office regarding management strategies. Recognizing that wildland fire management issues cross all lands and jurisdictions and involve a complex matrix of land and resource values, social concerns, and varying agency missions, goals, and policies, our decision was to use a collaborative approach with Federal, state, tribal, local and nongovernmental partners to develop a comprehensive wildland fire management strategy. This collaborative effort seeks solutions to wildland fire management issues on all lands, with active involvement of all levels of Government and non-governmental organizations, as well as the public.

The effort to develop a cohesive strategy focuses on restoring and maintaining resilient landscapes, creating fire-adapted communities, and responding to wildfires and is being undertaken in three phases. This phased approach will allow the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture to work with our partners to systematically and thoroughly develop a dynamic, science-based approach to planning for, responding to, and recovering from wildland fire incidents. Phase I involved the development of two documents: the first is *A National Cohesive Wildland Fire Management Strategy* (Cohesive Strategy), and the second is *The Federal Land Assistance, Management and Enhancement Act of 2009 – Report to Congress*. Both of these documents are enclosed. Together, these documents provide the foundation for the entire cohesive strategy effort. Regional strategies will be developed in the next phase, and a national trade-off analysis will be conducted in the third and final phase.

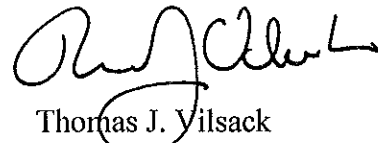
The Cohesive Strategy articulates our shared national challenges, assumptions, core values, goals, and performance measures for addressing the Nation's wildfire challenges. This collaboratively developed document establishes a way forward. The accompanying Report to Congress addresses the elements requested by Congress in the FLAME Act. In responding to a request from Congress, the Report addresses the seven primary elements facing fire and natural resource managers and the fire community at all levels, from local to national, and from states to tribes.

We believe this effort represents a new path forward for wildland fire management in the 21st century, in which Federal, state, tribal, local and nongovernmental partners will work closely to meet shared goals and objectives.

Sincerely,



Ken Salazar
Secretary
Department of the Interior



Thomas J. Vilsack
Secretary
Department of Agriculture

Enclosures