



**GOVERNOR
GREG GIANFORTE**



**GOVERNOR
BRAD LITTLE**

June 30, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

As our nation's western states confront an already severe wildfire season, each western governor faces challenges unique to his or her state and brings to bear unique experiences. No state in what it faces and how it responds is like another.

While we are encouraged to learn you will meet with eight western governors to discuss the federal government's response to wildfires, we were disappointed to learn not all western states who face a harsh wildfire season will be at the table.

It is critical to engage governors fully and directly to have a productive discussion about how the federal government can improve its wildfire response and prevention efforts.

While our states were not invited to participate in your meeting today, our states possess extensive experience and expertise in fighting wildfires, preventing them, and managing our forests. State agencies, working in partnership with the federal government, are on the cutting edge of wildfire response strategies and creative, collaborative forest management practices. Careful investment in and successful implementation of initiatives of the Good Neighbor Authority and Shared Stewardship are two examples.

Federal agencies frequently benefit from working closely with state agencies at the local level, and we need the same teamwork to happen at the national level.

We can achieve the best outcomes for the people we serve when the federal government works with states to develop and execute proactive plans that ensure we promptly respond to fires that put communities at risk. We should apply this operating principle regardless of whether a fire starts on private, state, or federal land.

As the summer continues, our states will work diligently to extinguish wildfires as quickly and prudently as possible to prevent the loss of life and property while continuing to address the land management practices that set the stage for the health of our landscape. We will continue to work toward effective, active land management, and we hope you will join us.

While western states will spend the coming months fighting wildfires alongside federal partners on the ground, it is critical we have a federal partner in the White House who is willing to do what needs to be done year-round to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires. The federal government must work with states to actively and meaningfully manage our lands to reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires.

The benefits of active land management are clear: healthier forests, communities and lands safer from the risk of severe wildfires, improved wildlife habitat, more recreational opportunities, and more good-paying jobs.

Please know our states stand ready to help other states and the federal government as we confront wildfire season.

We urge you to commit that our federal partners, regardless of whether they are based in our communities or based in an agency in Washington, D.C., will be active, responsive partners to improve wildfire response, wildfire preparedness, and meaningful forest management.

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor of Montana



Brad Little
Governor of Idaho