

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 16, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior to reimburse emergency expenses to suppress forest fires in FY 2003.

These amendments would adjust upward the total discretionary budget authority requested by \$0.4 billion, bringing the total discretionary funding agreed to by the Administration and the Congress to \$786.0 billion. While this request increases total discretionary spending beyond the previously agreed upon level, the Administration and congressional leadership determined earlier this year that emergency funding could be added when mutually agreed upon in advance. This request is consistent with that agreement.

The requests in this transmittal are for the purpose of fulfilling known and urgent requirements that cannot reasonably be met through the use of existing agency funds. I hereby designate the specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements.

The details of these requests are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Dennis Hastert". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

The Honorable J. Dennis Hastert
Speaker of the
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Enclosure



THE DIRECTOR

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20503

October 15, 2003

The President
The White House

Submitted for your consideration are requests for FY 2004 budget amendments for the Departments of Agriculture (USDA) and the Interior (DOI).

The 2003 fire season to date has seen over 50,000 fires burn nearly 3.2 million acres. The total FY 2003 cost of these fires was \$1.3 billion, well above the historical average. Prolonged drought and dense growth led to unusually intense wildfires this year. Many of these fires have threatened lives and homes in communities throughout the West. These fires have also caused extensive damage to watersheds and wildlife habitat that require emergency rehabilitation to prevent further damage to our natural resources.

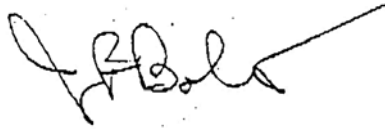
Due to extraordinary and unanticipated expenses in responding to fires on Federal public lands, the request would provide an additional \$0.3 billion for USDA's Forest Service and an additional \$0.1 billion for DOI's Bureau of Land Management to reimburse accounts from which funds were transferred in FY 2003. These amendments would adjust upward the total discretionary budget authority requested by \$0.4 billion, bringing the total discretionary funding level agreed to by the Administration and the Congress to \$786.0 billion.

While this request increases total discretionary spending beyond the previously agreed upon level, the Administration and congressional leadership determined earlier this year that emergency funding could be added when mutually agreed upon in advance. This request is consistent with that agreement. To ensure adequate funding to meet anticipated suppression needs in FY 2004, it is important that Congress fully fund your base request for fire suppression. We will continue to work with the Congress to address this important issue.

The requests in this transmittal are for the purpose of fulfilling known and urgent requirements that cannot reasonably be met through the use of existing agency funds. I recommend that you designate the specific proposals contained in this transmittal as emergency requirements.

I have carefully reviewed these proposals and am satisfied that they are necessary at this time. Therefore, I join the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior in recommending that you transmit the amendments to the Congress.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Bolten', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Joshua B. Bolten
Director

Enclosure

Agency: DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Bureau: FOREST SERVICE

Heading: Wildland Fire Management

FY 2004 Budget
Appendix Page: 177

FY 2004
Pending Request: \$1,541,775,000

Proposed Amendment: \$ 301,000,000

Revised Request: \$1,842,775,000

(In appropriations language under the above heading, delete "\$1,541,775,000" and substitute \$1,842,775,000; and add the following after the fourth proviso:)

Provided further, That of the funds provided, \$301,000,000 is to repay prior year advances from other appropriations from which funds were transferred for wildfire suppression and emergency rehabilitation activities: Provided further, That Congress designates the amount provided in the previous proviso as an emergency requirement for this specific purpose:

This proposal would provide an additional \$301 million for the Forest Service to reimburse accounts from which funds were transferred in FY 2003 for use in firefighting.

Agency: DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Bureau: BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
Heading: Wildland Fire Management
FY 2004 Budget
Appendix Page: 528
FY 2004
Pending Request: \$698,725,000
Proposed Amendment: \$ 99,000,000
Revised Request: \$797,725,000

(In appropriations language under the above heading, delete "\$698,725,000" and substitute \$797,725,000; and add the following after the third proviso:)

Provided further, That of the funds provided, \$99,000,000 is to repay prior year advances from other appropriations from which funds were transferred for wildfire suppression and emergency rehabilitation activities: Provided further, That Congress designates the amount provided in the previous proviso as an emergency requirement for this specific purpose:

This amendment would provide an additional \$99 million for the Department of the Interior to reimburse accounts from which funds were transferred in FY 2003 for use in firefighting.