



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Washington, DC 20240

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To: Fire Executives
Fire Directors

From: Jeff Rupert, Director - Office of Wildland Fire

Subject: 2019 Direction to Wildland Fire Leadership

As we approach another wildfire season, I want to recognize the important role that our firefighters play in protecting the public, communities and natural resources. The coming months will be the busiest as preparedness levels reach their highest and firefighters and resources are deployed across the country. We look to you for the leadership and expertise that is needed to safely and effectively carry out the Department of the Interior's (DOI) core wildland fire management mission.

On the fire line, on the road, and back at home, the well-being and safety of our firefighters is our highest priority as we manage increasingly complex incidents and endure competing demands. This means making smart choices about the risks that we take and promoting trust and confidence among our colleagues and partners. As leaders, we need to foster an environment that encourages all members of the wildland firefighting community to remain grounded in these core values to achieve our greatest successes.

Firefighting isn't getting easier and we all have a role to play in the collective pursuit of our unified mission. Our ability to pull together, set priorities, and accomplish meaningful work drives our success. There are factors that we can't influence, like the weather, and factors that we can affect, like the accumulation of unwanted vegetation. I am encouraged by the progress that we have made in developing a shared vision across the interagency wildland firefighting community to reduce wildfire risk by addressing wildfires before they start.

As always, I am impressed by the professionalism and expertise that is exemplified in the way that our firefighters perform their work. I recognize that this comes at great sacrifice by the men and women on the front lines, others who provide support, and those that are back at home.

As we focus on preparations for the coming season it is also important to sustain the efforts that have brought us success. Carrying out our shared stewardship of DOI lands in a safe, coordinated and responsible manner is key to the success of the Wildland Fire Management program.

Thank you for your leadership.