



United States Department of the Interior

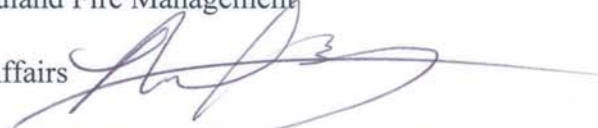
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
Washington, DC 20240

MAY 28 2014

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Memorandum

To: All Regional Directors
Attention: Forestry and Wildland Fire Management

From: Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs 

Subject: Wildland Fire Management, Utilization of Suppression Operations Account

This memorandum is to inform Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and Tribal Wildland Fire Management (WFM) programs on the appropriate and inappropriate use of Suppression Operations activities.

The Department of the Interior (DOI) has been managing fire suppression funding shortfalls by using transfer authority and fire borrowing. This approach has undermined other important functions, including critical range, forest management and fire risk reduction. Fire borrowing has created a damaging cycle in which balances are transferred from land management, restoration, fire preparedness, fuels management, and construction accounts, as well as other parts of agency budgets, to fund suppression.

The WFM, Suppression Operations activity funds the emergency and unpredictable aspects of the DOI Wildland Fire Management program. Suppression Operations include a range of actions taken to manage wildfires in a safe, cost-effective manner, while protecting values at risk in a manner consistent with resource objectives and land management plans. Suppression operations expenditures are defined in three activities: Suppression Operations, Emergency Stabilization, and Severity.

Suppression Operations (SO) program costs include expenses incurred by fireline, command, and support personnel required above the costs covered by preparedness. The SO activity also funds temporary emergency firefighters, aircraft operations and support, logistical services, supplies, equipment (including replacement of lost or damaged capital expendable equipment), contracts for goods and services, administrative support directly associated with incidents, and immediate measures to repair as a result of wildfire response activities.

Emergency Stabilization (ES) program costs are to reduce the risk of resource damage caused by floods, landslides, and erosion. The ES response actions range from intensive suppression when wildfires on trust lands threaten communities, high value resources, or critical ecosystems.

Severity funding is used to improve initial response capabilities when abnormal, severe wildfire conditions occur. Abnormal wildfire conditions arise when wildfire season starts earlier than normal, last longer than normal, or exceed average high fire danger ratings for prolonged periods. Severity funds typically are used to temporarily increase firefighter staff, pay for personnel and equipment, pre-position wildfire response units, conduct additional aerial reconnaissance and acquire other supplemental contract services. Severity authorizations are subject to strict controls to better manage the expenditure of these funds.

Currently, the Branch of Wildland Fire is working on a Fire Business Reference Handbook to provide further guidance and direction on this matter and other fire business related topics. The attachment provides further direction on appropriate use and inappropriate use on Suppression Activities.

Attachment