

FEDERAL LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

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FLEOA TO CONGRESS: FUNDING IS NEEDED TO PROTECT PUBLIC LANDS

(Washington, D.C.) – The Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (FLEOA), which represents more than 26,000 federal agents and officers nationwide, including those responsible for protecting our nation's federal public lands, is calling on Congress to increase funding for law enforcement and emergency services within land management agencies.

“For decades now agencies such as the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and National Park Service have gone significantly underfunded, resulting in a diminished ability to provide adequate public service for the millions of visitors to our nation's parks, monuments, refuges, and forests,” stated FLEOA President Nathan Catura.

FLEOA is urging Congress pass much needed legislation such as the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (H.R. 167 & S. 235), which was introduced in the 114th Congress and would provide for specified adjustments to discretionary spending limits to accommodate appropriations for wildfire suppression operations in the Departments of Agriculture and Interior, thereby ensuring that other mission-critical functions of law enforcement and public safety maintain their already-limited funds.

“Year after year Congress fails to address the significant issue of fire funding that repeatedly strips law enforcement funds from each agency and redirects them to fire suppression efforts across the western states,” said Catura. “While catastrophic fires are certainly a serious issue, our nation's public lands face more threats than that of just wildfires. Escalating violent crime, threats from drug cartels, poaching, illegal immigration use of public lands, and countless other issues pose significant year-round threats.”

Catura went onto note, “Agencies such as the Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management maintain excellent working relationships with local law enforcement. Such relationships are enhanced through federal dollars providing for cooperative law enforcement agreements. For years such funding has repeatedly diminished, not only reducing law enforcement coverage on

public lands, but also straining the relationships shared between federal and local law enforcement.”

FLEOA is urging legislators to prioritize resources that strengthen the law enforcement functions of these agencies instead of cutting them. They are also imploring Congress to enact wildfire funding reform legislation, increase appropriations for cooperative law enforcement agreements on our nation’s public lands, and increase discretionary funds for the agencies that manage them.

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The Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association (www.fleoa.org) is the largest nonprofit, nonpartisan professional association that exclusively represents over 26,000 active and retired federal law enforcement officers from over 65 Agencies.