

1 **Northwest Public Power Association**  
2 **Resolution 2018-15**  
3 **Ensuring Adequate Federal Funds to Combat Catastrophic Wildfires**  
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5 **Background**  
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7 Fires in the West have had a devastating impact on natural resources, property, and lives—  
8 including public power facilities and employees. Generating units, transmission and distribution  
9 lines, communications equipment, and utility buildings have been adversely affected by recent  
10 fires. The significant carbon emissions of fires – from burning vegetation and damaged trees left  
11 to decay, accounting for roughly one-fifth of total man-made emissions – also undermine utility  
12 efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.  
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14 Under federal law, the Departments of Agriculture and Interior forecast fire suppression  
15 budgets based on an average of the past ten years’ spending. When budgeted funds are  
16 inadequate, as frequently occurs, the agencies take funds from other accounts—including funds  
17 that are needed for forest management to prevent future fires as well as funds needed to  
18 properly restore the forest after a fire. This funding scheme is deeply flawed: the cycle of “fire-  
19 borrowing” denies the agencies of critical funds needed to maintain healthy forests and  
20 leads to more devastating fires and continued depletion of forest management funds.  
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22 Federal wildfire management needs to be overhauled to boost funding, prevent the raiding of  
23 needed fire prevention funds, and treat the most devastating fires as natural  
24 disasters. Bipartisan legislation has been introduced in Congress to ensure adequate and  
25 equitable funding for major fires. Under this legislation, catastrophic fires would be funded  
26 under a separate disaster account—just like funding for all other catastrophic natural disasters.  
27 Any fire suppression spending above 70% of the 10-year average for fire suppression would be  
28 eligible for disaster funding, with the remaining funding secured through appropriations.  
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30 Removing these mega-fires from the regular budget will free up substantial new funding for  
31 fire prevention and hazardous fuels reduction projects that can help break the cycle of  
32 increasingly dangerous and costly fires.  
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34 **NWPPA Position:**  
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- 36 • NWPPA supports swift enactment of legislation, or regulatory action, to establish  
37 wildfire funding mechanisms to ensure adequate and equitable funding to prevent and  
38 fight major forest fires.  
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40 Origination Date: 2016. Revised 2017.