

# NFFE News



## President Biden Visits West Coast Amid “Code Red” Wildfire Crisis

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On Monday, President Biden traveled to both Idaho and California to address extreme weather in the Western United States, which according to the President has produced a “code red” emergency – the ongoing wildfire crisis. There are currently 81 large, active wildfires blazing within the U.S. NFFE wildland firefighters and members working for federal land management agencies have been on the front lines battling this crisis, but they are in dire need of additional resources.



NFFE appreciates the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to allocating funds and assistance so that NFFE firefighters and members can better protect our country from devastating fires. These much-needed resources, however, will only be delivered if the President’s bipartisan infrastructure bill is passed. Among other, more board infrastructure improvements, the bipartisan infrastructure bill will allocate specific resources to the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management to aid wildland firefighters in battling the wildfire crisis and to better prepare them for future fire seasons.

The bill includes funding for a 50% increase in base salary or \$20k raise for federal firefighters, converts seasonal firefighters to permanent positions, calls for strategies to minimize exposure to line-of-duty environmental hazards, establishes better mental health programs, and includes resources to help track areas at risk of potential wildfires. In short, the bipartisan infrastructure bill will help federal agencies and firefighters prepare for and combat wildfires, as well as restoration post fire season.

The President took the opportunity to take an aerial tour of the damage from the Caldor Fire in California. Upon his return, he said, “We know that decades of forest management decisions have created hazardous conditions across the Western forest, but we can’t ignore the reality that these wildfires are being supercharged by climate change. It isn’t about red or blue states. It’s about fires.”

“NFFE is pleased to see that the President has been consistently calling for improvements to our federal firefighting workforce,” stated NFFE National President Randy Erwin. “Starting with his initiative to ensure all federal firefighters are paid at least 15 dollars an hour, and now personally meeting with firefighters and managers out West, it is clear the President understands how dire the situation is. NFFE is continuing to work with the Biden-Harris administration as they try to pass the bipartisan infrastructure bill, which will deliver necessary support to our brave firefighters who desperately need it to protect our nation from the wildfire crisis.”

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