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**File Code:** 5100  
**Route To:** 1300

**Date:** August 18, 2015

**Subject:** Support for Wildland Fire Response Efforts

**To:** Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director and Deputy Chiefs

The 2015 wildland fire season has been difficult for us as we have suffered serious injuries as well as fatalities. These tragic incidents strengthen our commitment to safety for ourselves and each other. I know the people across the Forest Service truly care for each other and for the important work we do each and every day. Our key focus, at every level of the organization, is making good decisions through risk management doctrine.

I thank you for the leadership you have already provided managing wildland fires, and for the work yet to come. I am also thankful for the continued contributions of our agency partners. I am confident in our ability to meet the challenges of this wildfire season.

As you know, the National Multi-Agency Group (NMAC) has increased the national fire Preparedness Level (PL) to its highest point, PL-5. The decision to move to PL 5 reflects the complexity facing our Federal and non-Federal fire managers. At this time, nearly all firefighting suppression capacity has been committed. There are over 25,000 interagency firefighters deployed for wildland fire suppression operations nationwide.

I thank you for your continued commitment to furnishing all of the assets and people you can and support your decisions to postpone other priority work to address this critical time. If your employees are red carded and available, I ask that their first priority be providing assistance for managing wildland fires. Additional support in the variety of areas that keep firefighting operations running is also needed. Every employee can do their part during this critical time.

I reemphasize that firefighter and public safety is a core value that governs every decision and fire management activity. Safety is not just a consideration in how we do our work; it is the essence of how we make decisions. We fully evaluate risks with a broad perspective for both planned and unplanned ignitions while considering the people we serve and landscapes we protect. In accordance with the goals of the Cohesive Strategy, we seek to create resilient landscapes, fire-adapted communities, and provide safe, efficient wildfire response.

Thank you for your leadership, engagement, continued commitment, and service in preparing for and protecting our Nation against the unwanted impacts of wildfire while managing for the health of our landscapes. Lastly I ask you all to continue to keep a supportive eye on those around you as we move forward with the critical work we do every day in the Forest Service.

*/s/ Thomas L. Tidwell*

THOMAS L. TIDWELL  
Chief

