



U.S. Department of
the Interior

Bipartisan Infrastructure Law

Two Years of Progress

November 2023





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Secretary's Message

For generations, communities across the United States have weathered interlocking challenges that jeopardize their health and safety, their livelihoods, and their futures. These mounting threats—from the climate crisis and environmental injustices like polluted air and drinking water, to the unique inequities that Tribal and rural communities face—impact each of us. They must be addressed at the scale and speed this moment demands.

Under President Biden's Investing in America agenda, a key pillar of Bidenomics, we are meeting this moment head-on. Foundational to this initiative is historic funding made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (Law), which was passed by Congress and signed by President Biden 2 years ago. This once-in-a-generation investment empowers communities to tackle the unique and pervasive challenges they have lived with for far too long, while also creating good-paying jobs, advancing environmental justice, and boosting the local economies that are the backbone to our entire Nation. As one of the Federal agencies at the helm of this historic opportunity, the Department of the Interior (Department) is implementing this funding with current and future generations in mind.

Two years into the Law's implementation, our Department has received \$28.1 billion across our Bureaus and Offices and has made incredible progress on our work to deliver a more equitable, sustainable future that works for everyone.

The impact of these resources is tangible, and our efforts are impossible to ignore. From coast to coast, habitat restoration projects support access to clean water and enhance habitats for fish and subsistence resources that local communities depend on. With long-sought funding, Tribal communities on the front lines of the climate crisis can plan for and adapt to our changing climate while protecting the ancestral homelands they have stewarded since time immemorial. In addition, a newly established behavioral health program is supporting our Nation's wildland firefighters with needed resources. Historic investments in water conservation and reuse are also inspiring innovative solutions across the West in the face of historic drought. Furthermore, toxic legacy pollution sites that endanger communities and ecosystems alike are finally becoming a thing of the past. Together, we are restoring and protecting the lands, waters, and wildlife that we all depend on for a livable planet.

Undeniably, our progress is grounded in the partnerships that guide these investments. Our work simply does not happen without Tribal and local voices leading the way—indispensable perspectives that will continue to inform us on the road ahead. It is also thanks to the dedicated Department officials across our country—leaders that I am honored to serve alongside each day—who deliver on our promises to the American public. Our work is far from over, but our progress toward building a just and equitable future for all is worth celebrating.



Deb Haaland
Secretary of the Interior

Financial Summary



The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law invests over \$28 billion to jump-start economic investment and address longstanding needs in Interior Department programs, and \$2.5 billion to fulfill pre-existing Indian Water Rights Settlements. These investments include:

- \$16 billion to **plug orphaned oil and gas wells and reclaim abandoned mine lands**. Addressing these toxic legacy pollution sites left behind by extractive industries will build healthier communities, create jobs, and spur economic revitalization in hard-hit energy communities.
- More than \$8 billion to **address water and drought challenges**, including making western communities more resilient to drought and climate change and advancing the short- and long-term sustainability of the Colorado River System.
- \$466 million to **support efforts in Indian Country** through the Bureau of Indian Affairs to revitalize Tribal infrastructure projects and advance climate resiliency.
- \$1.5 billion across Department land management agencies for **Wildland Fire Management** to strengthen the wildland firefighting workforce, build fire resilience through fuels management and burned area rehabilitation treatments, and invest in research, infrastructure, and technology modernization.
- \$1.4 billion to support **ecosystem restoration and resilience**, building on proven, nature-based projects, programs, and partnerships to protect cherished wildlife and nature resources while creating good-paying jobs that strengthen communities.
- More than \$500 million to improve our **scientific innovation** and increase our understanding of mineral resources across the country through integrated mapping, the preservation and collection of geological and geophysical data, and a laboratory facility for energy and minerals research.

Legacy Pollution

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law delivers the largest investment toward tackling legacy pollution in American history.

At the Department of the Interior (the Department, Interior Department, or DOI), the Law provides nearly \$16 billion for states, Tribes, and federal agencies to reclaim abandoned mine lands and clean up orphaned oil and gas wells. These investments create jobs, clean up environmental hazards, and restore lands for other uses, such as outdoor recreation and economic activities.

Abandoned Mine Land Reclamation

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$11.3 billion over 15 years to help address dangerous health, safety, and environmental conditions and clean up pollution caused by historic coal mining. This funding, overseen and distributed by the Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement (OSMRE), is enabling the reclamation of the majority of currently inventoried abandoned mine lands. Nearly \$725 million was allocated during the first year of the program, which has allowed states to close open mine portals, protect homes and infrastructure from subsidence and landslides, eliminate dangerous highwalls, create new recreation opportunities, and clean up water bodies polluted with acid mine drainage.

In June, the Department announced the availability of another nearly \$725 million in fiscal year (FY) 2023 funding to 22 states and the Navajo Nation to create good-paying jobs and catalyze economic opportunity by reclaiming abandoned coal mine lands.

Work-To-Date

The Abandoned Mine Land Program has:

- Reclaimed 221 abandoned mine land (AML) problems with Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding.
- Reclaimed 4,606 acres of abandoned mine lands across all AML programs during FY22 and FY23.
- Issued a total of 370 project approvals across all AML programs in FY 2023, with 85 for purely Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded projects and 4 using a mix of funding sources. These approvals are issued after all necessary reviews have been completed, and the project in question is approved for construction.
- As of November 3rd, 2023, awarded more than \$21 million dollars in FY23 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law AML grants to Alaska, Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, and New Mexico.

Project Spotlight

Ohio's Largest Acid Mine Drainage Site Clean Up



The Truetown Discharge, located in the Sunday Creek watershed, is the largest single acid mine drainage site in the State of Ohio, discharging 988 gallons of polluted water each minute. This amounts to more than 2 million pounds of iron oxide dumping into Sunday Creek each year, harming aquatic habitat in the Creek before it flows into the Hocking River. A 39-acre facility— directly funded by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law AML and the Abandoned Mine Land Economic Revitalization program—will treat approximately 1.4 million gallons of acid mine drainage daily, cleaning up Sunday Creek while processing iron oxide for professional-grade paint pigment production and employing at least five full-time workers. For years, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and community partners had wanted to undertake this work cleaning up the local environment and stimulating the local economy. The infusion of Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding is what ultimately made the difference in being able to move the nearly \$5 million dollar project forward, with construction work starting during spring 2023.

Project Spotlight

Iowa's Kuiper Project – One of the First AML Projects to use Bipartisan Infrastructure Law Funds

Iowa's Kuiper project in Marion County - one of the first AML projects in America to use Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds - is another great example of how historic investments are enabling reclamation work on a scale that was previously unimaginable. Before the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Iowa had a total annual budget of \$2.9 million for all AML project work, both planned and emergency. Thanks to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, which triples Iowa's available AML funds, the Iowa Mines and Minerals Bureau, working in partnership with the OSMRE and local nonprofits such as Pathfinders RC & D, can now tackle this large-scale reclamation project.

The project will help reclaim more than 80 acres, including 2,500 feet of dangerous highwalls, 52 acres of piles and embankments, 8 pit ponds, and an acidic, sediment-filled spoil pond. Design specialists plan to naturally regrade the valleys leftover from historic coal mining into the surrounding landscape, and follow the curvature of the existing stream. On the eastern end of the project site, Iowa Mines and Minerals is planning to use the timbered area for wildlife habitat restoration, while the western side of the project site will be focused on creating grazing pasture for landowners.

TESTIMONIAL

"Historically, Iowa has been a minimum program state, which means it'd be very difficult on our usual budget of \$2.9 million to fund a project this size. The addition of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds really allows us to tackle these large-scale projects that are over 80 acres." – Ryan Starkey, Project lead for the Kuiper Site.



Legacy Pollution



Orphaned Oil and Gas Wells

In January 2023, Secretary Haaland issued Secretary's Order 3409 to establish the Orphaned Wells Program Office to ensure effective, accountable, and efficient implementation of President Biden's historic investment in orphaned wells clean up. Orphaned wells are legacy pollution sites, which create environmental hazards and jeopardize public health and safety by contaminating groundwater, emitting noxious gases and methane, littering the landscape with rusted and dangerous equipment, and harming wildlife.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides funding to states, Tribes, and federal land managers to inventory, assess, plug, remediate, and restore orphaned gas and oil well sites and decommission associated infrastructure.

Work-To-Date

As of September 30, 2023, Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds have helped to plug 5,981 orphaned wells on State and private lands. Additionally, as of June 30, 2023, the Program has:

- Plugged 113 orphaned wells on Federal Land.
- Reduced 11,804 metric tons of potential methane emissions from 609 wells.
- Restored 185 habitat acres on state and private lands under initial grants.

Economic Contributions

- The Department's legacy pollution cleanup programs are creating jobs and revitalizing local economies.
- In FY22, legacy pollution cleanup and water resources programs created an estimated 12,534 jobs and contributed \$1.5 billion to the economy.
- In FY23, the programs created 22,805 jobs and contributed \$2.5 billion to the economy.

Project Spotlight

Well Plugging Operator Says He's Been Able to Nearly Double His Worker's Salaries

Headquartered in West Virginia and active across Appalachia, Hydrocarbon Well Services was awarded one of the first contracts in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania funded by President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to clean up orphaned oil and gas wells. Brian Jarvis, the President of Hydrocarbon, met with Secretary Haaland in the Pittsburgh area on February 9, 2023, to share the impact that this funding will have on his company and employees.



TESTIMONIAL

"My company is small, we have 25 employees right now, and we believe that this funding under the Biden administration and Secretary Haaland is going to be huge for our company long term. We've already been able to increase wages for our employees, almost double what they used to be. This is a game changer also for them, their homes and with their families" - Brian Jarvis, President of Hydrocarbon well services.

"The Infrastructure [Law] has changed the way that plugging is viewed. We are now much more important to communities than we were in the past. We used to struggle to get funding to do our projects and now we have plenty of funding to do our projects. We look forward to bidding on projects and hiring many more local people. And we just thank you and the Biden [- Harris] Administration for the opportunity," said Brian

Western Water and Drought



Water is essential to feeding families, growing crops, sustaining wildlife and the environment, and powering agricultural businesses. The Law is a historic step to provide critical funding to address water and drought challenges and invest in our nation's western water and power infrastructure while rebuilding our existing projects to withstand a changing hydrology.

The Law provides the Bureau of Reclamation a total of \$8.3 billion including:

- \$1 billion for WaterSMART Programs to support reuse projects that seek to conserve and use water more efficiently, mitigate conflict in areas at high risk of future water supply and demand imbalance, and accomplish other benefits that contribute to sustainability.
- \$1 billion for rural water projects to support projects that meet critical water supply needs of rural communities and Tribal nations.
- \$500 million for dam safety projects that will fund construction work to maintain reliability and minimize risk to the public.
- \$300 million to implement the Colorado River Basin Drought Contingency Plan, designed to protect the Colorado River system through voluntary reductions and increased conservation.
- \$250 million for Aquatic Ecosystems Restoration to invest in the health of fisheries, wildlife, or aquatic habitat through habitat restoration and improved fish passage.
- \$250 million for desalination construction to support the development and supplement municipal and irrigation water supplies through the treatment of ocean or brackish water, providing a local supply and flexibility during water shortages.
- \$100 million for watershed health projects, including the design, implementation, and monitoring of conservation outcomes of habitat restoration projects that improve watershed health.
- \$100 million for new small surface and groundwater storage projects with a capacity between 2,000 and 30,000 acre-feet; or which convey water to or from surface water or groundwater storage.

Western Water and Drought



Work-To-Date

- Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funded projects are creating hundreds of thousands of acre-feet of new water supplies.
- The Bureau of Reclamation has stood up new programs to support large-scale water recycling, small water storage and new opportunities for multi-benefit and nature-based projects.
- With historic investments from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Reclamation is reaching new communities in urban, suburban, and rural parts of U.S., with funding opportunities targeted to reach and facilitate participation from disadvantaged and underserved communities.
- Rural water projects who completion dates were previously decades off will now finish within the next five years.

Project Spotlight

After 60 Years, Major Colorado Water Project Finally Breaks Ground

Every community in the country deserves access to clean water, but the people of the Arkansas Valley in Colorado have been waiting 60 years for a water project to be completed. Thanks to funding from the President's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, Interior broke ground in 2023 on the Arkansas Valley Conduit Project which will finally bring clean, reliable drinking water to 39 communities in southeastern Colorado. When completed, the project's 230 miles of pipeline will deliver as much as 7,500 acre-feet of water annually from Pueblo to Lamar, where water providers in Bent, Crowley, Kiowa, Otero, Prowers and Pueblo counties will serve a projected future population of 50,000.



TESTIMONIALS

"This long-awaited project is a vital step forward for the Arkansas Valley and shows what can be accomplished through a strong coalition of federal, state, and local partnerships," said Jeff Rieker, Eastern Colorado Area Manager.

"Generations of people of the Lower Arkansas Valley have waited for the AVC for more than 60 years, and now with construction starting, we are seeing the realization of that dream," said Bill Long, President of the Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District. "This is the culmination of years of determination on the part of Reclamation, the District and the AVC participants to get this job done."

"This is a truly monumental achievement and marks the culmination of decades of hard work, dedication, and collaboration by those who have devoted their lives to the business of water," said Seth Clayton, executive director of Pueblo Water. "Pueblo Water is proud to be an integral participant in this important time in history."



Project Spotlight

Montana Family Gets Access to Clean Drinking Water



Through a \$7 million investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, in 2022 the Flaxville Branchlines were completed as part of the Fort Peck Reservation-Dry Prairie Rural Water System, adding 222 total home and pasture connections and bringing clean, reliable drinking water to families and farmers in rural Montana. Liselle Reed of Leonards Farms and her family of five gained access to clean, potable drinking water supplies through the project's completion.

TESTIMONIAL

"I have lived with well water my whole life. We could never own any white clothing and were constantly cleaning tubs and toilets to get the color out. We had to buy our drinking water in town at \$0.75 a gallon and that was such an annoying but necessary chore. House guests would always comment on the dirty water and cringe at having to shower in it. Having Dry Prairie water has been a huge life change! Our kids now have clean, clear baths and we are able to drink water from the tap that we didn't have to bring from town. Dry Prairie water has been hooked up to our house for four months now and we are still in awe at how clean the water is in the sinks, tubs and livestock tanks. We are so thankful to finally have such great water!" - Liselle Reed (February 2023)

Tribal Investments

Tribal communities have too often been left behind and not given a seat at the table for the decisions that impact them and their communities, including project development and funding opportunities.

President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is deploying record investments to provide affordable high-speed internet, safer roads and bridges, modern wastewater and sanitation systems, clean drinking water, reliable and affordable electricity, and good paying jobs in every Tribal community. The Interior Department supported the historic investment by holding nation-to-nation consultations with Tribes, providing a pathway to inform early planning decisions across programs and initiatives outlined in the law.

At the 2022 White House Tribal Nations Summit, the Department announced the launch of a new first-of-its-kind Voluntary Community-Driven Relocation Program, with an initial \$135 million commitment from the President's Investing in America agenda – historic legislation passed by Congress and signed by the President including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Inflation Reduction Act, American Rescue Plan, and the CHIPS and Science Act - to support Tribes severely impacted by the climate crisis. Support for relocation is being provided by the Federal Emergency Management Administration and the Denali Commission.

Projects funded through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law include:

- **\$2.5 billion to satisfy obligations under the** Indian Water Rights Settlement Completion Fund that help deliver long-promised water resources to Tribes and a foundation for future economic development for entire communities dependent on common water resources.
- **\$250 million for Tribal dams and water projects** to address irrigation, power systems, dam safety and water sanitation.
- **\$216 million for Tribal climate resilience** which will support adaptation strategies and community-driven relocation for Tribal communities impacted by climate change impacts.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law also made Tribal communities eligible for additional Department programs to support building resilience to wildland fire and drought, restoring ecosystems, enabling fish passage, and addressing legacy pollution from abandoned mine lands and orphaned oil and gas wells.

Project Spotlight

Hopi Arsenic Mitigation Project in Arizona Gets Access to Clean Drinking Water

TESTIMONIAL

"It's emotional to know that these communities are finally being served," Hopi Tribal Chairman Timothy Nuvangyaoma said. "It's difficult to put into words exactly how we feel. To be able to finally have so many people have safe, potable drinking water is an incredible feeling. I often think about this milestone that we've reached; it's been a long time coming. It's cliché, but it comes down to the phrase, 'water is life.' Everything that Hopi does and is, is connected culturally and traditionally to water. It is always reflected in our prayers. We are fighting to preserve life in the form of water, and I think that really resonates."

The Hopi Tribe has been suffering from arsenic contamination in its water supply since the 1960s when the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) first installed its drinking water system. In 2001, the Environmental Protection Agency's safe drinking water standards changed, resulting in water of six of the Tribe's villages exceeding safe levels by as much as three times the allowable contaminants. To help address the issue, the Hopi Tribe created the Hopi Arsenic Mitigation Project.

Thanks to an over \$8.7 million investment from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the necessary upgrades are underway to connect three BIA-owned water systems with the regional water system funded by the Indian Health Service and Environmental Protection Agency. This investment is critical to reduce naturally occurring arsenic concentrations in the groundwater wells of three water systems.



Ecosystem Restoration

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a major investment in the conservation and stewardship of America's public lands that will lead to better outdoor spaces and habitats for people and wildlife for generations to come. The Law includes \$1.4 billion for ecosystem restoration, which is a significant down payment in protecting our shared natural heritage. With these resources, the Interior Department is collaborating with states, Tribes, and local communities to invest millions of dollars annually to restore habitat connectivity for aquatic species around the country and advance habitat restoration, invasive species control, conservation of at-risk and listed species and benefits to several significant ecosystems.

In 2023, the Department unveiled a Restoration and Resilience Framework to support coordination across agency restoration and resilience programs and drive transformational outcomes. The framework includes a commitment to nine keystone initiatives which address climate change impacts, including through restoration of the Klamath Basin, salt marshes and core sage brush areas; support habitat for salmon, bison and Hawaiian forest birds that hold cultural, subsistence and ecosystem significance, and enhance communities' quality of life in Appalachia by improving outdoor spaces and addressing legacy pollution. The framework also invests resources towards the National Early Detection and Rapid Response Network and National Seed Strategy.



Ecosystem Restoration

Work-To-Date through the National Fish Passage Program:

Since the signing of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) received an additional \$200 million for restoring fish and wildlife passage to remove in-stream barriers and provide technical assistance under the National Fish Passage Program (NFPP). The funding is distributed over five years beginning in 2022, providing the opportunity to invest in our nation's rivers, streams, and communities.

To date, the Service has funded 79 Bipartisan Infrastructure Law projects, which, when completed, are projected to:

- Remove 212 barriers that are fragmenting rivers, blocking fish migration, and putting communities at higher risk to flooding.
- Reopen roughly 6,200 stream miles to improve aquatic connectivity and fish passage, which is one of the most effective ways to help conserve vulnerable species while building safer infrastructure and improving climate resilience.

With implementation underway for some of these projects, to date, 18 barriers have been removed and 271 stream miles have been reopened.

The Service is also facilitating a multi-agency effort to coordinate the delivery of roughly \$2 billion in Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funding for the restoration of fish passage and aquatic connectivity. In doing so, the Federal government is identifying new ways to coordinate across Federal agencies and improve how we share information about projects and leverage resources through the Federal Interagency Fish Passage Task Force.

Project Spotlight

A Weight Lifted in Gustavas Alaska



A perched culvert that's undersized passes Harry Hall Creek under a road in Gustavas, Alaska.



The new bridge as of October 2022.

A weight has been lifted from Southeast Alaska's Good River in Gustavas where funding from President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has removed the last culvert blocking the movement of salmon, Dolly Varden Char and Coastal cutthroat trout. The final of eight fish-friendly bridges now completed will allow salmon and other fish to move freely throughout the entire Good River and its tributaries, supporting the local environment and economy.

TESTIMONIAL

"Salmon are central to the Gustavas economy and lifestyles, and a growing community needs safer and more-serviceable roads," said Mayor of Gustavas, Mike Taylor. "Replacing failing, fish barrier culverts at hazardous stream crossings with safe, barrier-free bridges is a win for people and the environment. We are most grateful to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and our other funding partners for their support of the Gustavas Fish Passage Improvement Project."

Scientific Innovation



Scientific research is vital to the nation's understanding of its energy and critical mineral resources, training and retaining the next generation of natural resource scientists and preserving the nation's irreplaceable geologic knowledge. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides \$510.7 million to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to support integrated mapping and interpretation of mineral resources data, the preservation of data from geochemical samples from the Earth Mapping Resource Initiative (Earth MRI), and a replacement facility for USGS energy and minerals research centers in Golden, Colorado. Direct funding is also available for Department bureaus and federal agencies to provide USGS science to support additional infrastructure projects.

The USGS is making historic investments in scientific research including through:

- **\$167 million for a USGS Energy and Minerals Research Facility** to support the design, construction and tenant build out of a state-of-the-art USGS-owned facility for energy and minerals research through a cooperative agreement with an academic partner.
- **\$23.7 million for National Geological and Geophysical Data Preservation**, to support State Geological Surveys through the matched grants program to preserve and make digitally accessible geological and geophysical data and assets, including support of the Earth MRI critical minerals priorities.
- **\$320 million to advance the mapping mission of the USGS** to provide integrated topographic, geologic, geochemical, and geophysical mapping; accelerate the integration and consolidation of geospatial and resource data; and support the interpretation of subsurface and above-ground mineral resources data.

Collectively, these investments will deliver science information and data essential to the design, development, and management of the nation's infrastructure.

Work-To-Date

12 airborne geophysical surveys are underway, and the USGS has planned 23 other mapping projects and 14 mine waste projects through the Earth MRI programs to survey critical minerals that are used in batteries, semi-conductors, stainless steel, and more.

Project Spotlight

Investment in New USGS Building on Colorado School of Mines Campus

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has allocated \$167 million for a new research facility to be built on the Colorado School of Mines campus that will allow USGS researchers to work alongside the university's geoscience and energy professors. The new building will house the USGS Geology, Geophysics and Geochemistry Science Center and the Central Energy Resources Science Center. The project broke ground on November 13, 2023 and construction is expected to be complete by fall 2026.

TESTIMONIALS

"The soon-to-be-built world-class energy and minerals research facility will be the central hub for Mines-USGS collaborations on the critical mineral and energy challenges of our day, and it will also provide an unparalleled educational opportunity for our students to work and learn at the cutting edge of research and technology development with both Mines and USGS experts." – Paul C. Johnson, President, Colorado School of Mines



Wildland Fire



The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is bringing much-needed support to communities across the country to increase the resilience of lands facing the threat of wildland fires and to better support federal wildland firefighters.

The law includes \$1.5 billion for the Department to invest in preparedness, fuels management, post-fire restoration, and fire science, including:

- **\$878 million for hazardous fuels management** to protect vulnerable communities from wildfire while preparing natural landscapes for a changing climate.
- **\$325 million for post-fire restoration and rehabilitation activities** that will mitigate the damaging effects of wildfires and set landscapes on a path towards natural recovery and climate resilience.
- **\$245 million in investments in wildfire preparedness**, including our firefighting workforce and proactive planning on wildland fire response. The law also provides for the purchasing of equipment for early wildfire detection, real-time monitoring, and radios to support interoperability with interagency partners; financial assistance to local communities and Tribes to purchase slip-on tanks; and increases in firefighter pay and other firefighter workforce reforms.
- **\$10 million to support science and research on wildland fire management** issues that mitigate wildfire risk.

Work-To-Date

Since the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, the Office of Wildland Fire has:

- Completed fuels management work to reduce wildfire risk on 4.5 million acres since the beginning of the Bipartisan infrastructure Law, including 1.2 million acres directly funded by the Law.
- Invested all \$120 million provided to offer temporary pay increases to 5,440 Interior wildland firefighters.
- Took significant steps in the development of a first-of-its-kind mental health and wellbeing program for federal wildland firefighters.

Spotlight Stories

Firefighter Pay Increase Through Bipartisan Infrastructure Law



The Interior Department is continuing its efforts to reform our wildland fire workforce. Supported by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, this initiative will give our employees greater stability, enable them to grow in their positions, and improve the Department's ability to address more extreme wildfires and meet the year-round needs for wildland fire management activities. These reforms represent a generational change for our wildland fire workforce.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a supplemental salary increase of \$20,000 per year, or 50% of base salary (whichever is less), for wildland firefighters employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture/U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior. This improvement builds upon President Biden's 2021 initiative to support federal wildland firefighters and ensure they receive a minimum of \$15 per hour. Under that initiative, approximately 3,500 of Interior's roughly 5,000 wildland firefighters received \$7.6 million in additional monetary recognition.

Wildland Fire

FIREFIGHTER TESTIMONIALS

"The pay increase through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has allowed me to begin saving for my first home." —Megan, Fuels Technician, National Park Service, South Florida Parks

"For the first time in my career, I feel valued. It's like getting a pat on the back. The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law] funding has added flexibility to my life and helped me prioritize my family and not 100% rely on overtime for survival. It has helped me manage my fatigue and add some work-life balance to my life." —John, Assistant Engine Captain for the National Park Service, South Florida Parks

"The [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law] funds have made living and working in South Florida a possibility. It has allowed me to move and work in areas that wouldn't be possible otherwise and gain that valuable experience to advance my fire career." – Jason, National Park Service, South Florida Parks Helitack Crewmember



Cross Cutting Priorities

Spotlight Accomplishment

Good Jobs in the Clean Economy MOU Signing

Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Labor

The Department of the Interior, in partnership with the Department of Labor, has committed to ensuring our programs and policies address barriers to opportunity and build an economy that empowers all people, including individuals from underserved communities. As part of this shared commitment, the Departments entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to leverage the individual and combined resources and expertise to ensure the actions necessary to meet common goals related to expanding equitable access to quality jobs for workers and communities.

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su, Environmental Protection Agency Chief of Staff Dan Utech, and other key stakeholders participated in a “Good Jobs in the Clean Economy” event with labor, conservation, and environmental justice leaders to discuss how their agencies are collaborating to create good quality jobs in infrastructure, clean energy, manufacturing, and technology as part of the President’s Investing in America agenda.

During the event, Secretary Haaland and Acting Secretary Su signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote cooperative efforts between the two agencies to build sustainable career pathways that meet industry needs for talent and worker needs for quality jobs. The partnerships will enable both departments to share resources and expertise to guide their actions to meet their shared goals to expand an equitable and diverse workforce while taking significant action to combat climate change.



Cross Cutting Priorities

Joint Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission

The Departments of the Interior, Agriculture and Homeland Security Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established a new Wildland Fire Mitigation and Management Commission. Establishing this Commission fulfills a key provision of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and represents a critical step in combating the nation's wildfire crisis and improving resilience in America's landscapes. The 50 commission members have a broad range of expertise with wildfire, including firefighting, prescribed fire, cultural burning, watershed restoration, pre-fire mitigation, research, public health, post-fire recovery and more.

In September, the Commission released a compilation report which outlines comprehensive and holistic recommendations for transforming our wildland fire response approach from reactive to proactive, building sustainable and long-term solutions, and creating communities and landscapes that are more resilient and adaptable to wildfire as a fundamental part of our world. Proposed solutions also strongly support increased collaboration and coordination across scales and jurisdictions, and greater inclusion of all entities within the wildfire system. Taken together, these recommendations are intended to help lead the nation toward a different relationship and experience with wildfire.



Spotlight Accomplishment

Convening of the Interagency Group on Insular Affairs

Interagency Group on Insular Affairs (IGIA) Waive Match Requirements

The Territories are an integral part of the fabric of America, and the freely associated states, while independent countries, are uniquely interwoven with the United States through a shared history, ongoing partnership, and shared vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific. This shared vision is carried out and overseen by the Office of Insular Affairs. At the Interagency Group on Insular Areas (IGIA) annual conference for territorial governors, members of Congress, and other federal government officials, Secretary Haaland announced that the Interior Department, with direction from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), is waiving all local cost share requirements under for grants for the four U.S. territories. This new policy will reduce the financial burden on the U.S. territories of American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guam, and U.S. Virgin Islands.



In February 2023, the IGIA convened its annual meeting with territorial governors, members of Congress, and top government officials to discuss critical infrastructure needs in the U.S. territories of American Samoa, Guam, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. During the meeting, Secretary Haaland announced that the Interior Department will extend its existing local cost share waiver to apply to all grants, regardless of amount.



U.S. Department of the Interior
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