

# **INSLEE CALLS FOR INVESTMENT TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE ON WILDFIRE CALL**

Spokesman Review (Spokane, WA)

July 31, 2021 Saturday

MAIN Edition

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**Section:** C; Pg. 001

**Length:** 527 words

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**Dateline:** OLYMPIA

## **Body**

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OLYMPIA - No human intervention can stop wildfires while the **climate** "continues to ravage these forests," Gov. Jay Inslee told the president on Friday.

Inslee joined six governors in a virtual meeting with President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on Friday to discuss wildfire fighting and prevention. Gov. Gavin Newsom of California, Gov. Kate Brown of Oregon, Gov. Tim Walz of Minnesota and Gov. Mark Gordon of Wyoming joined the call.

Govs. Brad Little of Idaho and Greg Gianforte of Montana also joined the call after not receiving an invite to a similar call last month with Biden.

The governors expressed their concern over lack of resources moving forward this fire season, as well as the ability to manage federal forest lands.

Inslee said his biggest worry is if Congress does not pass Biden's infrastructure plan, which includes a clean energy standard, electrification of transportation systems, and a civilian **climate** corps to train and employ young people to address **climate change**.

"We have to have those **climate** investments," Inslee said. "It's the only way to save these forests."

A bipartisan group of senators reached a deal on a \$1 trillion national infrastructure plan, and the Senate voted 67-32 on Wednesday to take up the package. The current plan is less than Biden's original \$2.6 trillion plan proposed in March and does not include funding for clean energy tax credits or housing, schools and child care.

Currently, there are 64 uncontained large fires in the country and 3.4 billion acres have burned, according to the U.S. Forest Service.

"There are big, complex wildfires burning against multiple areas," Biden said. "We need more help."

The governors each shared what they need to help fight and prevent these wildfires, including additional planes, more trained firefighters and fuel, which has been in low supply in many states already this year.

"Everything we need to fight forest fires is in dire need across the western United States," Inslee said.

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Many also expressed concerns with how the federal government manages and fights fires on their lands, calling for a better partnership with state governments.

Much of the forest land in states is owned and operated by the federal government, and states only have so much power to actively manage and fight fires on those lands. Montana's Gianforte called on the federal government to better manage their forest lands to prevent more fires from happening.

Managing forests includes thinning and prescribed burns, which leads to healthier forests that are less likely to burn as quickly and as hot.

"Everybody wins when we have good stewardship of forests," Gianforte said.

Newsom also expressed concern with how the forest service handles fire suppression on their lands, citing a fire on federal lands in both California and Nevada that spread quickly.

"There is a culture that is too often 'wait and see,'" Newsom said. "We can't afford that any longer."

Inslee also called on the federal government to provide better independent assistance for towns like Malden, which burned last fall but residents did not get any individual assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

## Notes

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## Classification

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**Language:** ENGLISH

**Publication-Type:** Newspaper

**Subject:** WILDFIRES (91%); FIRES (90%); FORESTS & WOODLANDS (90%); GOVERNORS (90%); LEGISLATIVE BODIES (90%); TALKS & MEETINGS (90%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2020 (90%); **CLIMATE CHANGE** (89%); FIRE PREVENTION & SAFETY (89%); FOREST FIRES (89%); FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (89%); GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION (89%); PUBLIC LAND MANAGEMENT (89%); US FEDERAL GOVERNMENT (88%); US STATE GOVERNMENT (79%); BIPARTISANSHIP (78%); LAND USE & DEVELOPMENT (78%); PRESCRIBED FIRES (78%); PUBLIC LANDS (78%); REGIONAL & LOCAL GOVERNMENTS (78%); US PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES 2016 (78%); ENERGY & UTILITY POLICY (73%); ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (68%); FIREFIGHTERS & FIREFIGHTING (50%)

**Industry:** ENERGY & UTILITIES (89%); FOREST RESOURCES MANAGEMENT (89%); PRESCRIBED FIRES (78%); ALTERNATIVE & RENEWABLE ENERGY (73%); ENERGY & UTILITY POLICY (73%); ENERGY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS (68%)

**Person:** BRAD LITTLE (79%); GAVIN NEWSOM (79%); GREG GIANFORTE (79%); JAY INSLEE (79%); JOE BIDEN (79%); KATE BROWN (79%); MARK GORDON (79%); TIMOTHY J WALZ (79%); KAMALA HARRIS (78%)

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**Geographic:** SPOKANE, WA, USA (90%); WASHINGTON, USA (93%); CALIFORNIA, USA (92%); NEVADA, USA (79%); UNITED STATES (92%)

**Load-Date:** August 3, 2021

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