



BRAD LITTLE
GOVERNOR

April 3, 2025

The Honorable Mike Moyle
Speaker of the House
Idaho House of Representatives
Hand Delivered

Dear Mr. Speaker,

I hereby advise you that I have signed on April 3, 2025, and transmitted to the Office of the Secretary of State, with my approval, the following House Bill, to wit:

HOUSE BILL 389

within the time prescribed by law, the same having arrived in the Office of the Governor at the hour of 4:20 p.m. on April 2, 2025.

I have fought many battles with the federal government when it appears they do not utilize a full suppression strategy on large federal fires. I appreciate the sponsors of this legislation for bringing a proposed solution to a real problem facing Idahoans every summer, and I agree with the intent of this legislation.

However, I have concerns that the Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) will not be able to implement this change until they receive adequate resources for fire suppression, guided by the agency's wildland fire strategic planning efforts.

Last year, IDL spent nearly \$60 million fighting wildfires in Idaho compared to the \$350 million the U.S. Forest Service spent fighting fires in Idaho. I recommended \$40 million in ongoing funding and \$60 million in one-time funding this session. The Legislature chose to commit just \$40 million in additional one-time funds for fire suppression, leaving a total of \$50 million for the 2025 fire season.

Simply put, if we have a bad fire year, the amount the Legislature appropriated for fire suppression will not be enough to cover the bills for the fires the state is responsible for, and it is certainly not enough to pick up the slack on federal jurisdiction.

I am firmly on record that the days of putting wildland fire suppression costs on a credit card are behind us. Given the trend of longer fires seasons with more acres burned, more extreme

fire behavior, and a significant increase in costs, going into debt paying for suppression is fiscally irresponsible and creates uncertainty for wildland firefighters, contractors, and state fire managers.

I look forward to working with my legislative partners to ensure IDL has the resources to prevent, respond to, and safely suppress wildfires quickly and aggressively in Idaho.

With new leadership in Washington, D.C., I am hopeful this legislation never becomes necessary. If it does, though, I want our firefighters to have the resources to carry out the mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Brad Little", is centered on the page.

Brad Little
Governor of Idaho