

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Topic: President's FY2026 Budget Request for the U.S. Forest Service

10 July 2025

Highlights:

- The [Testimony of U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Schulz](#) included reference to the administration's zeroing out of the State, Private and Tribal discretionary account, citing the administration's priorities shifting to an emphasis on federalism and increasing State authority in forest management and fire prevention.
- There was discussion in the committee on expanding Tribal co-management of federal forest lands and increasing funding for [Tribal Forest Protection Act](#) projects.
- Chief Schultz noted that the USFS' proposed move of wildland firefighting duties to the U.S. Department of Interior would be laid out in a plan in 90 days.

Witness:

[U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Schulz](#)

Summary:

This hearing reviewed the Trump Administration's proposed FY2026 budget for the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). Lawmakers questioned USFS leadership on wildfire preparedness, forest health, and Tribal co-stewardship initiatives on a budget request that included increased funding for wildfire suppression, forest restoration and resilience.

There was discussion in the committee on expanding Tribal co-management of federal forest lands and increasing funding for [Tribal Forest Protection Act](#) projects. Chief Schultz also conceded that the administration's priorities and shifting responsibilities included cuts to some previously appropriated Tribal forestry programs. Some senators expressed strong opposition to these cuts and reorganizations, citing the critical role these programs play in fire preparedness and community resilience. The administration's rationale in this shift raised concerns among senators about the impact on under-resourced communities, including Tribes.

Committee Chair Mike Lee (R-UT) spoke in support of the reorganization proposal, saying that state and Tribal governments were "indispensable partners ... whose lives are inextricably intertwined with the lands in question."

Chief Schulz touched on numerous issues changing the look of the current USFS approach, including the administration's budget request that will transfer USFS Wildland Fire Management appropriations to the U.S. Department of the Interior (DOI).

- This will foster the creation of the U.S. Wildland Fire Service under DOI, including more than 10,000 positions of firefighters, operational and business support eventually.

Chief Schultz noted that the USFS would release an updated plan on this proposal within 90 days of the committee hearing.