



STATE OF TEXAS

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September 14, 2011

Mr. Tom G. Boggus
Director/State Forester
Texas Forest Service
John B. Connally Building
301 Tarrow Drive, Suite 364
College Station, TX 77840-7896

Dear Mr. Boggus:

Due to the extreme drought conditions and destructive wildfires that have burned millions of acres across the State of Texas this year, we believe it is vitally important to provide volunteer fire departments with the critical resources they need to save lives and protect property when dangerous wildfires threaten their communities.

With firefighting resources already stretched and a probability of continued wildfire activity this biennium, we request that the Texas Forest Service immediately take two actions. First, please establish an expedited distribution of the \$27 million allocated by the 82nd Legislature for the Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program (VDAP). Next, in addition to the regular program, we ask that you commit an additional \$5 million for volunteer fire department expenses not normally covered by the VDAP. Such expenses may include fuel, tires, hoses, supplies, critical firefighting equipment and clothing as well as necessary repairs to existing equipment. Funding distribution processes should include screening procedures and criteria necessary to prioritize funding for volunteer fire departments hardest hit by wildfires this year.

As we are only two weeks into the new fiscal biennium and demands caused by these fires may necessitate expenditures above these funding levels, we stand ready to identify additional resources for the Texas Forest Service efforts as you inform us of additional needs. We ask that the Texas Forest Service use its existing budgetary flexibility to begin both activities immediately. It is our intent to utilize transfer authority already in the General Appropriations Act or supplemental appropriations to reimburse you for these expenses.

We also want to take this opportunity to thank you, your staff, and the thousands of volunteer firefighters who risk their lives every day to keep our homes and communities safe and our families free from harm.

Sincerely,

Rick Perry *David Dewhurst* *Joe Straus*

Rick Perry
Governor

David Dewhurst
Lieutenant Governor

Joe Straus
Speaker of the House