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Department of
Natural Resources

Anchorage, Alaska

STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: July 2, 2024

State Wildland Firefighters to Receive Incentive Pay Increase

(Anchorage, AK) – On National Wildland Firefighter Day, we thank all of the brave people who put their lives on the line to protect Alaskans as well as the amazing support staff who enable firefighting efforts across the state.

Governor Mike Dunleavy recently signed the Fiscal Year 2025 budget that prioritizes public safety for Alaskans, including a pay increase to State of Alaska wildland firefighters with the Department of Natural Resources' Division of Forestry & Fire Protection. The pay bump will help retain experienced firefighters, recruit new teammates, and ensure the Division can meet its mission to provide for public safety and protect life, property, infrastructure, and natural resources.

The mission-critical incentive pay is being implemented in conjunction with a wildland firefighter job reclassification study. In 2023, the Division had a 50% vacancy rate in some critical sections going into the wildland fire season and needed to import significant staff from the Lower 48.

"With the intensified wildland fire environment both nationally and globally, we are never going to fully avoid the need for out-of-state resources during extreme seasons," said **Norm McDonald, Deputy Director of Fire Protection**. "What this pay increase will help us achieve is building back our Alaskan workforce. Federal wildland firefighter pay has been at the forefront of ongoing conversations in the U.S. Congress. Now, thanks to Governor Dunleavy's administration and this public safety initiative, the State of Alaska is showing its commitment to providing our firefighters fair compensation for the dangerous and challenging work they perform for Alaskans."

Multiple initiatives in the budget aim to prepare the State of Alaska for the next 50 years of wildland firefighting by retaining firefighters, rebuilding rural crews, and improving fire response.

Alongside increased pay for State wildland firefighters, the Division of Forestry & Fire Protection is developing a comprehensive program to support its workforce. This includes training and professional development, Wildland Firefighter Academy opportunities, a fuels reduction program, and a cutting-edge health & wellness program.

The Department of Natural Resources' mission is to develop, conserve, and maximize the use of Alaska's natural resources consistent with the public interest.

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