



September 8, 2014

Dear Secretary Jewell,

This letter is in response to a letter we received from Jim Douglas, Office of Wildland Fire, for the Department of Interior. Mr. Douglas replied to our Safety Matters Forum Briefing. While we do appreciate the response and believe it to be a sincere response from the Department of Interior, it reads very similarly to the response letter we received from the US Forest Service on behalf of the Department of Agriculture.

We did follow up with Mr. Sean Cross, NWCG Program Manager and had a very pleasant discussion. We remain very concerned that the wildland fire agencies show very little sense of urgency about the issues we have raised in our Forum Briefing. We acknowledge that the issues are complex, which also lends one to believe that a sense of urgency is needed.

We sincerely believe that the focus should be on preventative measure improvements that help prevent wildfire entrapments. These are imminently preferable to a focus on improvements following entrapments. Although we do suggest that an independent wildland fire fatality investigation process is developed similar to the NTSB for aviation accidents. It is abundantly clear that the current investigation processes have real shortcomings in complex fatality accidents.

We do not believe that diversions over data (we are using your own data) should shift the attention away from serious discussion about how to avoid additional entrapments, especially during this time of increased fire activity across the country.

We will continue to seek action and support and Safety Matters will remain engaged. Our efforts to help improvement firefighter safety are calling out for your strong leadership at the Secretarial level.

Best Regards,

**The Safety Matters Team**

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