



## News Release

For Immediate Release  
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### **Virginia Department of Forestry sends help to the wildfires in Texas and Oklahoma**

A very long siege of wildfire activity, which shows no signs of coming to an end, is taking its toll on firefighting resources in Texas and Oklahoma. Hundreds of thousands of acres have burned, homes have been lost and there have been several injuries and fatalities over the last several weeks.

Virginia Department of Forestry (VDOF) Chief of Operations Ed Zimmer said, "Our friends in the Southwest are on their second month of ongoing, significant fire activity and need some help." He and the VDOF Chief of Emergency Response John Miller agreed that Virginia could do just that.

John Miller said, "The recent rains could not have come at a better time as this will allow us to help our neighbors to the Southwest." The Virginia Department of Forestry realizes that their number-one responsibility is protecting Virginia citizens and resources; but agreements are also in place that allow for sharing state resources for incident management and wildfire control

Nine highly trained and qualified agency personnel were dispatched to Texas and Oklahoma Sunday. Their expertise includes incident management, heavy equipment operation and direct wildland firefighting experience. Today the agency is sending an additional two brush trucks with four experienced personnel. Finally, a fourteenth VDOF employee is assisting with a fire investigation in Oklahoma. Agency personnel are typically deployed for 14 days, and all of the related agency expenses will be reimbursed by the receiving state.

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The Virginia Department of Forestry protects and develops healthy, sustainable forest resources for Virginians. Headquartered in Charlottesville, the Agency has forestry staff members assigned to every county to provide citizen service and public safety protection across the Commonwealth, which it's been doing now for more than 100 years. VDOF is an equal opportunity provider.

With nearly 16 million acres of forestland and more than 108,000 Virginians employed in forestry, forest products and related industries, Virginia forests provide an overall economic output of more than \$21 billion annually.