



National Wildfire Coordinating Group
National Interagency Aviation Committee

NIAC-21-02

Date: 19 March 2021
To: Frank Guzman, Chair, National Wildfire Coordinating Group
From: John Buehler, Chair, National Interagency Aviation Committee
Subject: Issue Statement and Request for Solution to Inconsistent Interagency Review and Approval of Special Mission Programs Across All Agencies

Purpose: The purpose of this memorandum is to express need for standardization in partner agency review and approval of federal special mission programs should interagency partner programs and special use missions continue to be accepted. Please distribute this information through your agency channels.

Issue/Action: Currently, inconsistent standards are in place which require partner agency review and approval of federal special mission programs and are causing administrative burdens, confusion at local interagency units, and they present the opportunity for communication breakdowns and degradation of resources. These standards, predominantly USFS requirements when ordering DOI aircraft, lack consistent application across specific special missions. For example, USFS has required USFS review and approval of DOI special use operations prior to authorizing their use on USFS lands. This requirement appears in conflict with the numerous interagency and NWCG standards in place. Additionally, this requirement, which does not reference any policy, is inconsistent in its application. Certain DOI operations are allowed without review, while others are denied or only authorized in part. The operations which the USFS have required review of are operations represented by NWCG committee, subgroup or unit. NIAC is asking the NWCG Board to determine whether to continue accepting interagency review for special mission programs. If the EB does elect to continue, NIAC also asks that specific standards be put across all agencies to provide consistent review and approval of special mission operations on each other's lands.

Background and Coordination: This issue has been discussed multiple times amongst NIAC members, at the November 2020, December 2020, and January 2021 NIAC Meetings. All NIAC members feel that it is in the best interest of interagency operations to find a solution to this issue statement.

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