

Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
Witness Disclosure Requirement - "Truth in Testimony"
Required by House Rule XI, Clause 2(g)(5)

1. Your Name:
Jim Karels

2. Your Title:
Florida State Forester

3. The Entity(ies) You are Representing:
National Association of State Foresters

4. Are you testifying on behalf of the Federal, or a State or local government entity?	Yes	No X
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5. Please list any Federal grants or contracts, or contracts or payments originating with a foreign government, that you or the entity(ies) you represent have received on or after January 1, 2015. Only grants, contracts, or payments related to the subject matter of the hearing must be listed.

National Association of State Foresters
Listing of Federal grants and/or contracts received since January 1, 2015

Source	Grant Number	2015	2016	2017	Total
USDA Forest Service	17-DG-11132543-045	-	-	198,000	198,000
USDA Forest Service	17-DG-11132543-046	-	-	153,600	153,600
USDA Forest Service	17-CA-11132543-026	-	-	148,800	148,800
USDA Forest Service	17-DG-11132543-031	-	-	262,000	262,000
USDA Forest Service	16-DG-11132543-059	-	80,500	80,500	161,000
USDA Forest Service	16-DG-11132543-060	-	185,504	185,504	371,008
USDA Forest Service	15-DG-11132543-052	139,750	139,750	139,750	419,250

USDA Forest Service	14-DG-11132543-085	87,290	116,477	116,477	320,244
USDA Forest Service	14-DG-11132543-084	79,283	65,000	79,283	223,566
USDA Forest Service	14-DG-11132543-083	<u>168,665</u>	<u>173,980</u>	<u>173,980</u>	<u>516,625</u>
		<u>474,988</u>	<u>761,211</u>	<u>1,537,894</u>	<u>2,774,093</u>

6. Please attach your curriculum vitae to your completed disclosure form.

See Attached

Signature:  **Date:** September 28, 2017

JAMES R. KARELS



OVERVIEW

James “Jim” Karels is the Florida State Forester and Director of the Florida Forest Service. Jim is a native of Minnesota and graduate of the University of Minnesota. He has more than 35 years experience in wildfire suppression and land management, and has served with the USDA Forest Service in addition to the Florida Forest Service. He represents all 50 states on the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, Wildland Fire Executive Council and the National Association of State Foresters Fire Committee, providing support for the implementation and coordination of National Fire Management Policy in the United States.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Florida Forest Service

Director/State Forester (May 2008 – Present)

- **Oversees all wildland fire suppression and protection for 26 million acres of land in Florida.**
- **Directs the largest prescribed fire program in the nation, burning on average over 2.3 million acres per year.**
- **Oversees all technical private lands forestry assistance conducted by the agency.**
- **Provides leadership and guidance for all land management activities on 37 state forests covering more than 1.2 million acres.**
- **Manages a Florida Forest Service budget of approximately 150 million dollars per year.**
- **Appointed as member of the Governor’s Land Acquisition and Restoration Council and sits on numerous state and national boards and associations dealing with wildland fire suppression, forest management and emergency disaster response.**

Assistant Director (July 2003 – May 2008)

- **Supported the Director in overall management of the agency and was responsible for managing the agency’s budget of \$100 million per year in operations, equipment, facilities and buildings.**
- **Provided guidance and oversight to field units regarding large-scale fire operations in the Wildland/Urban Interface.**
- **Directed the Department’s all-risk emergency response management program for Florida’s hurricanes, floods, wildfires, oil spills and other incidents.**

Chief of Forest Protection (December 2000 – July 2003)

- **Directed coordination, planning, management and response of all wildfire prevention, mitigation, and suppression activities in Florida.**
- **Oversaw all wildfire training, qualifications, and out-of-state fire resource assignments for the Florida Forest Service.**
- **Was responsible for the development of all laws and rules, operational procedures, and implementation of Florida’s prescribed fire program.**

Assistant Chief of Forest Protection (December 1995 – December 2000)

- Supported the Fire Chief in all aspects of wildland fire management and response in Florida, including oversight during wildfire suppression activities that incorporated various tactics such as fire line plowing and counter-fire operations.
- Acted as Incident Commander for Florida's statewide Unified Command response during significant wildfire years from 1998-2001. During this time, in-briefed and conducted final exit briefing for more than 30 Incident Command Teams that assisted Florida.
- Served as the Team Leader during development and implementation of the National Type I training course, Complex Incident Management Course (CIMC).

Forestry Programs Administrator (November 1992 – December 1995)

- Organized wildfire response at the statewide level, developed statewide wildfire prevention and mitigation plans, and supported district units in wildfire prevention and response, including many wildfire operations that utilized counter-fire techniques.
- Managed the federal excess firefighter property program statewide support hundreds of local Volunteer Fire Departments.
- Acted as state officer-in-charge, on a rotation basis, for wildfire and all-risk emergency response in the State of Florida.
- Served on state Incident Management Team as an Air Operations Branch Director.

Senior Forester (October 1987 – November 1992)

- Developed state forest land management plans and organized hiring of entry-level foresters.
- Directed statewide operations for two forest seedling nurseries and the forest genetics program.
- Assisted development of Florida's fire aviation program for helicopter operations and response.
- Acted as lead Helicopter Manager, Helicopter Base Manager and Air Support Group Supervisor.
- Responded to wildfires in Florida and in the western United States as a fire crew squad boss, helicopter crew member, helicopter base manger, and other various roles.

County and State Lands Forester (November 1985 – October 1987)

- Worked with private forest landowners on forest management plans, prescribed fire, timber sales and reforestation projects.
- Developed and implemented prescribed fire plans, fire prevention plans, timber harvest plans, road maintenance, and recreation plans for state forests.
- Provided wildfire response services to the district as a qualified strike team leader, helicopter manager and firefighter.

Forest Ranger/Firefighter (February 1985 – November 1985)

- Operated Type II and III dozer/plow units and engines on wildfires throughout Florida.
- Responded to western fire assignments as a fire crew member.
- Earned full certification as a Florida wildland firefighter as required by Florida Statutes. Requirements for certification included successful passage of more than 400 hours of training in all aspects of wildfire prevention, mitigation and response in Florida.

USDA Forest Service (USFS)

Firefighter (1981-1984, Fire Seasons)

- Worked two fire seasons on the Umatilla National Forest in Washington and Oregon as a firefighter and was red carded, or certified nationally, as a firefighter II. Responded to numerous wildfires throughout the forest and conducted fire mitigation brush work, trail maintenance and fire tower lookout repairs.
- Worked as a firefighter I and II, and as a helicopter crew member on the Black Hills National Forest in South Dakota and Wyoming. Responded to wildfires throughout the national forest with crews, engines, and helicopters. Also worked as a forest recreation technician.

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSIGNMENTS

- Wildland Fire Leadership Council member (2011-2016)
- National Association of State Foresters (NASF) President (2014-2015)
- American Forest Foundation Operations Committee member (2014-2016)
- NASF Fire Committee Chair (2010-2014, 2016)
- NWCG Fire Operations Working Group (1996-2003)

The Fire Operations Working Group national team oversees all national fire operations and fire qualifications standards.

- Wildland Fire Executive Council member (2011-2014)

NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ASSIGNMENTS (Continued)

- Complex Incident Management Course (CIMC) Director (1998-2008)
Guided the development and implementation of the ongoing CIMC type I Incident Management Qualification Course

EDUCATION/TRAINING/CERTIFICATIONS

- University of Minnesota, Bachelor of Science in Forest Management
 - Florida Certified Wildland Firefighter
 - Florida Certified Prescribe Burn Manger
 - Florida Certified Public Manager

NATIONAL WILDFIRE QUALIFICATIONS

- Air Operations Branch Director
- Air Support Group Supervisor

- **Area Command Aviation Coordinator**
- **Incident Commander Type I & II**
- **Agency Representative**
- **Liaison Officer**
- **Operations Section Chief Type 2**
- **Plastic Sphere Device Operator**

NATIONAL AWARDS AND HONORS

- **Society of American Foresters' Forestry Commitment award, 2016**
- **Current Achievement Award for Fire Protection, NASF 2002**
- **Outstanding Leadership Award in appreciation of leading the Yarnell Hill Fire Fatality Serious Accident Investigation Team, 2013**
- **Current Achievement Award for Fire Protection, NASF 2015**