

**Editorial Notes**

## AMENDMENTS

2006—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 109-163 substituted “, fire fighting, and emergency services, including basic medical support, basic and advanced life support, hazardous material containment and confinement, and special rescue events involving vehicular and water mishaps, and trench, building, and confined space extractions” for “and fire fighting”.

**§ 1856a. Authority to enter into reciprocal agreement; waiver of claims; reimbursement; ratification of prior agreements**

(a) Each agency head charged with the duty of providing fire protection for any property of the United States is authorized to enter into a reciprocal agreement, with any fire organization maintaining fire protection facilities in the vicinity of such property, for mutual aid in furnishing fire protection for such property and for other property for which such organization normally provides fire protection. Each such agreement shall include a waiver by each party of all claims against every other party for compensation for any loss, damage, personal injury, or death occurring in consequence of the performance of such agreement. Any such agreement may provide for the reimbursement of any party for all or any part of the cost incurred by such party in furnishing fire protection for or on behalf of any other party.

(b) Any agreement heretofore executed which would have been authorized by this subchapter, if this subchapter had been in effect on the date of execution thereof, is ratified and confirmed.

(May 27, 1955, ch. 105, § 2, 69 Stat. 66.)

**§ 1856a-1. Authority to enter into contracts with State and local governmental entities**

Notwithstanding any other provision of law, in fiscal year 1992 and thereafter, the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of the Army, and the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institution are authorized to enter into contracts with State and local governmental entities, including local fire districts, for procurement of services in the presuppression, detection, and suppression of fires on any units within their jurisdiction.

(Pub. L. 102-154, title III, § 309, Nov. 13, 1991, 105 Stat. 1034; Pub. L. 110-114, title II, § 2012, Nov. 8, 2007, 121 Stat. 1075.)

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## CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Department of the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 1992, and not as part of act May 27, 1955, which comprises this subchapter.

## PRIOR PROVISIONS

Provisions similar to those in this section were contained in the following prior appropriation act: Pub. L. 101-512, title III, § 310, Nov. 5, 1990, 104 Stat. 1959.

## AMENDMENTS

2007—Pub. L. 110-114 inserted “the Secretary of the Army,” after “the Secretary of Energy.”

**§ 1856b. Emergency assistance**

In the absence of any agreement authorized or ratified by section 1856a of this title, each agency head is authorized to render emergency assistance in extinguishing fires and in preserving life and property from fire, within the vicinity of any place at which such agency maintains fire-protection facilities, when the rendition of such assistance is determined, under regulations prescribed by the agency head, to be in the best interest of the United States.

(May 27, 1955, ch. 105, § 3, 69 Stat. 67.)

**§ 1856c. Service in line of duty**

Any service performed under section 1856a or section 1856b of this title, by any officer or employee of the United States or any member of any armed force of the United States shall constitute service rendered in line of duty in such office, employment, or force. The performance of such service by any other individual shall not constitute such individual an officer or employee of the United States for the purposes of subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5.

(May 27, 1955, ch. 105, § 4, 69 Stat. 67.)

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## CODIFICATION

“Subchapter I of chapter 81 of title 5” substituted for “the Federal Employees’ Compensation Act, as amended” on authority of Pub. L. 89-554, § 7(b), Sept. 6, 1966, 80 Stat. 631, the first section of which enacted Title 5, Government Organization and Employees.

**§ 1856d. Funds**

(a) Funds available to any agency head for fire protection on installations or in connection with activities under the jurisdiction of such agency may be used to carry out the purposes of this subchapter. All sums received by any agency head for fire protection rendered pursuant to this subchapter shall be covered into the Treasury as miscellaneous receipts.

(b) Notwithstanding subsection (a), all sums received as reimbursements for costs incurred by any Department of Defense or Department of Agriculture activity for fire protection rendered pursuant to this subchapter shall be credited to the same appropriation or fund from which the expenses were paid or, if the period of availability for obligation for that appropriation has expired, to the appropriation or fund that is currently available to the activity for the same purpose. Amounts so credited shall be subject to the same provisions and restrictions as the appropriation or account to which credited.

(May 27, 1955, ch. 105, § 5, 69 Stat. 67; Pub. L. 110-181, div. A, title X, § 1080, Jan. 28, 2008, 122 Stat. 335; Pub. L. 112-81, div. A, title III, § 364(a), Dec. 31, 2011, 125 Stat. 1380; Pub. L. 113-79, title VIII, § 8304(f), Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 924.)

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## AMENDMENTS

2014—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 113-79 inserted “or Department of Agriculture” after “Department of Defense”.

2011—Subsec. (b). Pub. L. 112-81 amended subsec. (b) generally. Prior to amendment, subsec. (b) read as fol-

lows: “Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (a), all sums received for any Department of Defense activity for fire protection rendered pursuant to this subchapter shall be credited to the appropriation fund or account from which the expenses were paid. Amounts so credited shall be merged with funds in such appropriation fund or account and shall be available for the same purposes and subject to the same limitations as the funds with which the funds are merged.”

2008—Pub. L. 110-181 designated existing provisions as subsec. (a) and added subsec. (b).

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

EFFECTIVE DATE OF 2011 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 112-81, div. A, title III, §364(b), Dec. 31, 2011, 125 Stat. 1380, provided that: “The amendment made by subsection (a) [amending this section] shall apply with respect to reimbursements for expenditures of funds appropriated after the date of the enactment of this Act [Dec. 31, 2011].”

**§ 1856e. Reimbursement of fire funds**

**(a) Definition of State**

In this section, the term “State” means—

- (1) a State; and
- (2) the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

**(b) In general**

If a State seeks reimbursement for amounts expended for resources and services provided to another State for the management and suppression of a wildfire, the Secretary, subject to subsections (c) and (d)—

- (1) may accept the reimbursement amounts from the other State; and
- (2) shall pay those amounts to the State seeking reimbursement.

**(c) Mutual assistance agreement**

As a condition of seeking and providing reimbursement under subsection (b), the State seeking reimbursement and the State providing reimbursement must each have a mutual assistance agreement with the Forest Service or another Federal agency for providing and receiving wildfire management and suppression resources and services.

**(d) Terms and conditions**

The Secretary may prescribe the terms and conditions determined to be necessary to carry out subsection (b).

**(e) Effect on prior reimbursements**

Any acceptance of funds or reimbursements made by the Secretary before February 7, 2014, that otherwise would have been authorized under this section shall be considered to have been made in accordance with this section.

(Pub. L. 113-79, title VIII, §8304, Feb. 7, 2014, 128 Stat. 924.)

**Editorial Notes**

CODIFICATION

Section was enacted as part of the Agricultural Act of 2014, and not as part of act May 27, 1955, which comprises this subchapter.

Section is comprised of section 8304 of Pub. L. 113-79. Subsec. (f) of section 8304 of Pub. L. 113-79 amended section 1856d of this title.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

DEFINITION OF “SECRETARY”

“Secretary” as meaning the Secretary of Agriculture, see section 9001 of Title 7, Agriculture.

**SUBCHAPTER II—WILDFIRE SUPPRESSION WITH FOREIGN FIRE ORGANIZATION**

**§ 1856m. Definitions**

In this subchapter:

**(1) Assume any and all liability**

The term “assume any and all liability” means—

- (A) the payment of—
  - (i) any judgment, settlement, fine, penalty, or cost assessment (including prevailing party legal fees) associated with the applicable litigation; and
  - (ii) any cost incurred in handling the applicable litigation (including legal fees); and
- (B) with respect to a Federal firefighter, arranging for, and paying the costs of, representation in the applicable litigation.

**(2) Federal firefighter**

The term “Federal firefighter” means an individual furnished by the Secretary of Agriculture or the Secretary of the Interior under an agreement entered into under section 1856n of this title.

**(3) Foreign fire organization**

The term “foreign fire organization” means any foreign governmental, public, or private entity that has wildfire protection resources.

**(4) Foreign firefighter**

The term “foreign firefighter” means an individual furnished by a foreign fire organization under an agreement entered into under section 1856n of this title.

**(5) Wildfire**

The term “wildfire” means any forest or range fire.

**(6) Wildfire protection resources**

The term “wildfire protection resources” means any personnel, supplies, equipment, or other resources required for wildfire presuppression and suppression activities.

(Pub. L. 100-428, §2, as added Pub. L. 112-74, div. E, title IV, §411(2), Dec. 23, 2011, 125 Stat. 1039.)

**Editorial Notes**

PRIOR PROVISIONS

A prior section 1856m, Pub. L. 100-428, §2, Sept. 9, 1988, 102 Stat. 1615, related to definitions, prior to repeal by Pub. L. 112-74, div. E, title IV, §411(2), Dec. 23, 2011, 125 Stat. 1039.

**Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries**

SHORT TITLE OF 1989 AMENDMENT

Pub. L. 101-11, §1, Apr. 7, 1989, 103 Stat. 15, provided that: “This Act [repealing section 1856p of this title] may be cited as the ‘Wildfire Suppression Assistance Act.’”

SHORT TITLE

Pub. L. 100-428, §1, Sept. 9, 1988, 102 Stat. 1615, as amended by Pub. L. 112-74, div. E, title IV, §411(1), Dec.