

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 26, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

In light of the ongoing wildfires throughout the Western states, we strongly urge your administration to prioritize emergency funding to meet the needs of the firefighters and the communities affected by these devastating natural disasters. In times of crisis, our nation has always come together to support our fellow Americans in critical need of assistance, and we believe that the federal government has a duty to help those affected by natural disasters with any and all of its capabilities.

We appreciate your swift action in declaring a Major Disaster recently for the wildfires in Northern California, which have destroyed over 8,400 homes and buildings, scorched over 245,000 acres, and forced thousands to evacuate over the past weeks. Tragically, this catastrophe has already claimed the lives of 42 people. Unfortunately, this event highlights that wildfires have grown more extreme and will only become more frequent, as demonstrated by the number and severity of wildfires that have occurred in the past decade. Since the beginning of this year, nearly 9 million acres have already burned nationwide, and the wildfires have shown no signs of slowing down. The destruction caused by these wildfires has claimed and will continue to claim lives, homes, and businesses, and will cost communities millions of dollars in economic loss.

The fires currently devastating our nation underscore the need to ensure that additional attention and federal resources can be brought to bear in both preventing and fighting wildfires. The Disaster Cap Adjustment has been a critical tool in funding the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Agriculture (USDA), and other agencies providing emergency relief for victims of all disasters. However, the amounts available in the Disaster Cap have been decreasing over time and is not sufficient to encompass all disasters. Therefore, we urge you to work with our colleagues to increase the Disaster Cap to ensure that there are adequate levels of federal funding to respond to all disasters, including the wildfires that have and will continue to affect our nation.

In addition, we have supported a bipartisan solution called *The Wildfire Disaster Funding Act*, which would fix the way the federal government budgets for wildfire by treating them like other natural disasters – a fix that Secretary Perdue has indicated to the Office of Management and Budget would be helpful. Passage of this bill also will free up much needed money for fire prevention work in the future. As we work with our colleagues in Congress to pass supplemental disaster packages that will provide essential relief to millions of Americans in need, we will continue to push for inclusion of a wildfire budget fix.

We urge you to make it a priority that all Americans who need emergency assistance get what they need, whether affected by a hurricane, wildfire, or other disaster. Since the beginning of this year, wildfires have ravaged nearly 9 million acres across our nation from Alaska to Florida and have taken significant tolls on our local communities and economies. We hope to continue to work with your administration on programs administered by the FEMA, USDA, the Small Business Administration, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other federal agencies, in order to help communities and victims recover from these tragic events.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to working with you on how to best assist all those who have been severely impacted by disasters across the United States.

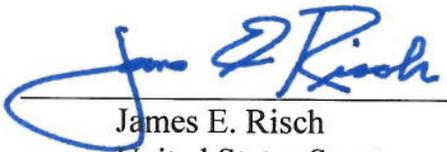
Sincerely,



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



James E. Risch
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Mike Crapo
United States Senator



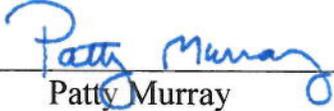
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator

cc: The Honorable Mick Mulvaney
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The Honorable Elaine Duke
Acting Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
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The Honorable Sonny Perdue
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