

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 18, 2017

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer:

The U.S. House of Representatives recently passed the latest disaster supplemental funding bill. We request that you work with us to include the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act, legislative language that ensures the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior (DOI) have stable, reliable funding to help prevent wildfires.

As you know, 2017 has been a record-breaking year for wildfires, with the Forest Service and DOI spending nearly \$2.9 billion fighting these disasters. While it is absolutely necessary that the agencies responsible for fighting wildfires receive the funds they need for fiscal year 2017, this is only the first step to solving this long-term problem. In addition to emergency funding, the Forest Service and DOI require stable, reliable funding to help prevent wildfires before they begin. The bill we introduced, the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act (W DFA), is a long-term, bipartisan funding solution that fixes the long-festering problem of fire borrowing.

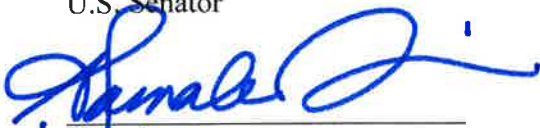
The Senate should continue to push for a fire funding fix that treats wildfires like the natural disasters they clearly are. Together, we should work to stop the erosion of the Forest Service budget that siphons resources from important fire prevention programs, like hazardous fuels thinning and the State and Private Forestry program, to pay for fire suppression.

Passage of the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act will free up funds to do the prevention work that reduces the risk of catastrophic wildfires that our country has suffered this year -- funding that could have prevented the deaths of Americans, destruction of hundreds of homes and businesses, the loss of business revenue due to evacuations, and the loss of millions of acres of forests. We ask that you work with Western senators to include a comprehensive wildfire funding fix in any disaster supplemental bill that comes before the Senate.

Sincerely,



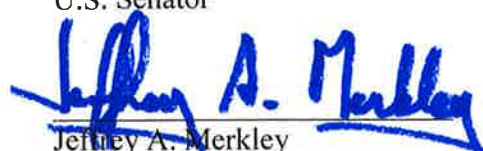
Ron Wyden
U.S. Senator




Kamala D. Harris
U.S. Senator





Mike Crapo
U.S. Senator





Jeffrey A. Merkley
U.S. Senator


Dianne Feinstein
U.S. Senator


Patty Murray
U.S. Senator


Michael F. Bennet
U.S. Senator


Maria Cantwell
U.S. Senator


Jon Tester
U.S. Senator


James E. Risch
U.S. Senator