

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 21, 2017

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

Dear Mr. President:

We strongly support Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr.'s request for a major disaster declaration for the State of California in response to the severe wildfires that have swept through Southern California this month. We urge you to approve the Governor's request to make federal assistance available under Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act and other programs.

This year's wildfire season in California has been nothing short of catastrophic. Over 1.2 million acres have burned in the state this year. In October, wildfires destroyed thousands of homes and killed 44 people in Northern California. Since the beginning of December, six large wildfires have burned nearly 300,000 acres in Southern California. Driven by high temperatures, strong and unpredictable winds, low humidity, and dry brush, the wildfires have forced more than 200,000 residents to evacuate their homes, burned over 1,000 structures, and have tragically claimed the lives of one civilian and one firefighter. One of these fires, the Thomas Fire, is now the second largest wildfire in state history and continues to threaten communities in Southern California.

Additionally, five other large fires have burned across Los Angeles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Diego counties. These fires led to evacuations, road closures, destruction of residences, and terrible air quality hazards. Put simply, this has been the worst wildfire season in recent memory and one of the worst in California history.

We appreciate your approval of earlier requests to provide federal assistance, and we ask that you again approve this request for disaster aid. We support Governor Brown's request and strongly urge you to declare a major disaster. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator