

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

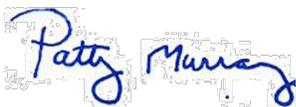
Congratulations on your recent inauguration; we look forward to working with you these next four years. Today, we write to urge you to quickly approve Governor Jay Inslee's September 16, 2020, and October 8, 2020 requests for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Washington and supplemental federal assistance.

Last year, Washington state experienced a historically destructive wildfire season on top of an already unprecedented year. For context, an estimated 626,982 acres burned throughout the state in the five day period from September 7th to the 11th. That area alone exceeded each of the total burned acreages in each of the fire seasons between 2002 and 2019, with the exception of 2015's devastating wildfire season. These wildfires forced the evacuations of thousands of people, threatened 3,000 homes and structures, and deteriorated air quality to hazardous levels. The town of Malden, a small, rural community in Whitman County, was devastated by wildfires, with 80% of its structures destroyed or seriously damaged. Most of Malden's 300-some residents are under- or uninsured and are also grappling with the strenuous economic burdens of the COVID-19 pandemic. These residents cannot wait any longer.

The Washington state delegation sent three letters of support to former President Trump urging expedient action on the governor's request. Despite responding to several other disasters across the country that occurred after Washington's wildfires, the Trump administration refused to make a determination and as a result, has held our constituents hostage for 128 days. This inaction by the former president and his administration is unconscionable and we look to you to right this wrong for our constituents.

We fully support Governor Inslee's request for a Major Disaster Declaration statewide as well as Public Assistance and Individual Assistance for eligible counties. Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this matter.

Sincerely,



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Patty Murray  
United States Senator



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Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator