

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

December 8, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Northwest  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Mr. President and Administrator Gaynor:

We write to inquire about Governor Jay Inslee's September 16, 2020, and October 8, 2020 request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Washington and supplemental federal assistance.

As you know, Washington state grappled with a wildfire season of historic scope and intensity this year. In the five day period from September 7th to the 11th, an estimated 626,982 acres burned throughout the state. 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 at that time.

In particular, the town of Malden, a small, rural community in Whitman County, saw most of their community reduced to ashes. An estimated 80 percent of homes and other structures in the town including the town's only post office, town hall, fire station, food bank, and library were destroyed or seriously damaged. Individual and Public Assistance for this town would provide critical support, particularly for eligible individuals who evacuated and are unable to return to their community. Thankfully, nobody died in Malden. But most of its 300-some residents were uninsured and already living on the economic margins. According to state records, Malden has met the threshold for Small Business Administration (SBA) assistance but none can be provided until the Governor's requests are approved.

Now, 83 days have passed since the Governor requested federal assistance. For 83 days, thousands of displaced Washingtonians have watched as FEMA trailers assist those in neighboring states but have seen no federal aid coming their way. For 83 days, the state of

Washington continues to be overwhelmed as it copes with clean-up and rebuilding efforts on top of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. 83 days is too long to sit in limbo after experiencing such a damaging wildfire season.

Again, we fully support Governor Inslee's request for a major disaster declaration statewide as well as Public Assistance and Individual Assistance for eligible counties. Please let us know if you need further information to inform your decision.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray  
United States Senator



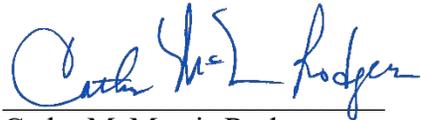
Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



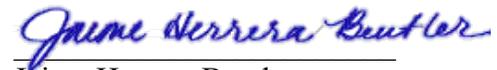
Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



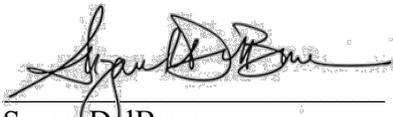
Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Member of Congress



Jaime Herrera Beutler  
Member of Congress



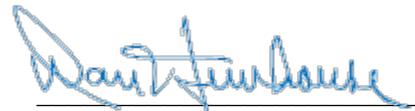
Suzan DelBene  
Member of Congress



Denny Heck  
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer  
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress