

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 23, 2014

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner, Majority Leader Reid, Minority Leader Pelosi, and Minority Leader McConnell:

We are writing to urge you to take swift action to consider the President's emergency supplemental appropriations request. As representatives from California, we want to draw your specific attention to the need to address shortfalls in our nation's wildfire suppression services. We urge you to work together and pass this critical funding measure.

The President's request includes \$615 million for wildfire suppression this year, along with a budgetary change necessary to ensure that we can fight fires without drastic cuts to treatment and prevention. As you know, land management agencies are regularly forced to divert funding from fire prevention projects to find funding for wildfire suppression. As former Secretary of Agriculture Dan Glickman recently wrote: "An ounce of prevention may be worth a pound of cure, but when it comes to fires the government doesn't provide enough resources for either."

Without Congressional action, the U.S. Forest Service and other agencies will be forced to delay hazardous fuels removals, timber harvests, and other practices that reduce the risk of wildfires. In California, these funding constraints have already caused the cancellation of a contract to repair cracks in an air tanker base taxiway in Southern California, increasing safety concerns for air tankers utilizing this taxiway. In the past, the need to divert prevention resources toward wildfire suppression has delayed timber sales in Klamath National Forest, and deferred hazardous fuels reduction projects in Tahoe National Forest and Plumas National Forest.

Let us be very clear: this is an emergency, and failure to act on the supplemental appropriations request will make our state and its citizens more vulnerable to wildfire. Firefighting costs have exceeded their budget eight of the last ten years and we face prolonged droughts and longer wildfire seasons nationwide. In June, nearly 80% of California was under extreme drought conditions, and 36% of the state was in an "exceptional" drought, the highest category on the U.S. Drought Monitor.

Working together, Congress can provide the emergency funding necessary to appropriately fund wildfire suppression this year, and allow for sound budget practices for these disasters in the future. Congress should not sit by and do nothing while the threat continues to escalate in California and the rest of the West. We strongly urge you to work cooperatively towards passage of the President's request without delay.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress



SCOTT PETERS
Member of Congress



JUAN VARGAS
Member of Congress



ALAN LOWENTHAL
Member of Congress



GRACE NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress



JULIA BROWNLEY
Member of Congress



HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress



JUDY CHU
Member of Congress



MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress



MAXINE WATERS
Member of Congress



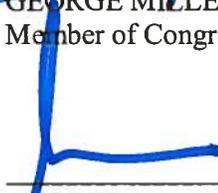
MIKE HONDA
Member of Congress



GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



AMI BERA
Member of Congress



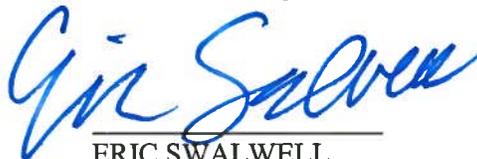
LINDA SÁNCHEZ
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



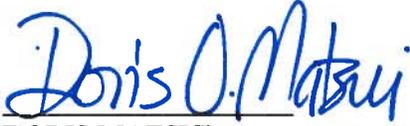
ERIC SWALWELL
Member of Congress



ADAM SCHIFF
Member of Congress



ANNA G. ESHOO
Member of Congress



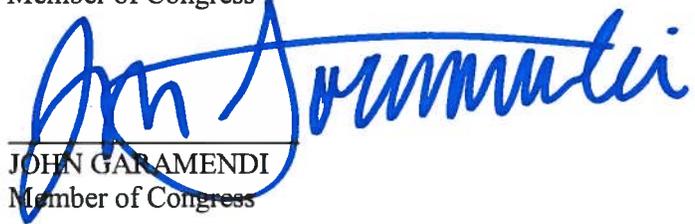
DORIS MATSUI
Member of Congress



GLORIA NEGRETE MCLEOD
Member of Congress



JACKIE SPEIER
Member of Congress



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



SAM FARR
Member of Congress