

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 12, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C St. S.W.C
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor,

As you are aware, Oregon has declared a State of Emergency because of the recent wildfires, and the President has approved the state's Emergency Disaster Declaration request. A Major Disaster Declaration request is also currently under consideration. We are writing with a specific request that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) take additional action to protect the health and safety of people experiencing displacement and houselessness, and to secure housing stability for the lowest-income survivors displaced by the wildfires in Oregon.

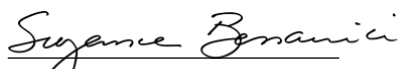
Wildfires continue to surge across Oregon at unprecedented rates. Because of historic winds and dry fuel conditions, nearly one million acres have already burned just in the past few days. For comparison, for the last ten years an average of approximately 500,000 acres have burned each year during an entire fire season in our state. Air quality has surpassed hazardous levels, further endangering the health and livelihoods of those already at risk of respiratory issues from the coronavirus pandemic.


Tens of thousands of Oregonians have been placed under evacuation orders, and hundreds have already lost their homes. Unfortunately, these figures continue to grow by the hour and day. We are grateful to the state and federal personnel who have made lifesaving measures a priority this week, but the road to recovery will be long and challenging. As first responders fight to contain fires and we begin to assess how the fires have wreaked havoc on our communities, we need additional federal resources—particularly for those in need of immediate and longer-term shelter.


We urgently ask that FEMA immediately make available the greatest possible range of assistance programs as requested by the Governor, potentially including Individual Assistance (IA), Public Assistance (PA), Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA), and any other available short- and long-term housing resources. We also request that FEMA waive current state cost-share requirements to help quickly move unsheltered individuals to safety and make sure that survivors have stable, affordable accommodations as they strive to recover.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent request and for your continued commitment to responding to the desperate needs of Oregonians affected by these catastrophic wildfires.

Sincerely,


Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress


Ron Wyden
United States Senator


Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



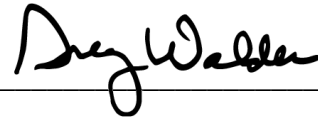
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Greg Walden
Member of Congress