



Background on Senator Heinrich's Leadership on Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Response and Recovery

In November, Heinrich, U.S. Senator Ben Ray Luján (D-N.M.), and U.S. Representative Teresa Leger Fernández (D-N.M.) [announced that President Biden's disaster supplemental request includes \\$1.5 billion to help New Mexicans recover from the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire](#). If President Biden's disaster supplemental request is approved by Congress, Heinrich, Luján, Leger Fernández, and the N.M. Congressional Delegation will have secured \$5.45 billion to help New Mexicans recover and rebuild since the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire in April 2022.

Additionally, Heinrich, Luján, and Leger Fernández [sent a letter urging the FEMA Director of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office and the FEMA Director of the New Mexico Joint Recovery Office to address concerns from New Mexicans about the process for receiving compensation](#) from the Claims Office and help families get the relief and compensation needed to recover.

In September, Heinrich, Luján, and Leger Fernández secured an [extension to the period that victims may file claims with the Hermit's Peak Claims Office](#) to December 20, 2024. The lawmakers are continuing to call for the passage of their [Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Extension Act](#), legislation they introduced last year to extend the period a victim can file a claim with the Hermit's Peak Claims Office through the end of 2027.

In June, [Heinrich met with local leaders](#) in Las Vegas, N.M. to discuss the continuing impacts to the City of Las Vegas's water treatment plant and water system due to recent floods and the ongoing fallout from the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire. He also sat down with local families and small business owners in Mora, N.M. to discuss their experiences with the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office.

On the two-year anniversary of the official start of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire, Heinrich [wrote a column in the Las Vegas Optic](#) about his ongoing work to help New Mexico families, communities, and businesses recover from the fire and the floods that have followed.

Heinrich, Luján, Leger Fernández, and U.S. Representatives Melanie Stansbury (D-N.M.), and Gabe Vasquez (D-N.M.) [welcomed the expansion of the FEMA Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office in Mora](#). This announcement came after a January letter from the Delegation calling on FEMA to expedite the claims process for those impacted by the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire and immediately address the backlog of claims. The new facility with expanded operations opened to the public Monday, April 1. The new space consists of two accessible buildings and a parking lot, all located behind the Mora County Courthouse, 1 Courthouse Dr., Mora, N.M.

In March, the N.M. Congressional Delegation [welcomed nearly \\$2 million](#) from FEMA to fund the development of a comprehensive Watershed Restoration Plan for the areas directly impacted by the 2022 Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon fire. The investment is funded through the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act, secured by the New Mexico Congressional Delegation.

In October 2023, Heinrich, Luján, and Leger Fernández [introduced the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Extension Act](#) to extend the period a victim can file a claim with the Hermit's Peak Claims Office. Under the new bill, the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Claims Office would remain open until the end of 2027.

In August 2023, Heinrich, Luján, and Leger Fernández [welcomed over \\$6.5 million in federal funding](#) to San Miguel County for reimbursement for county road repairs as a result of the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire. That same month, Heinrich [welcomed final regulations for the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Assistance Act](#) to speed the relief process.

In May 2023, Heinrich, Luján, and Leger Fernández [sent a letter to DHS Secretary Mayorkas and FEMA Administrator Criswell](#) expressing concern over the prolonged delay in finalizing the regulations for the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire Claims Office.

In December 2022, Heinrich, a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee and a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, [secured funding in the Omnibus Appropriations Agreement for Fiscal Year 2023 \(FY23\)](#) to support critical U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) emergency disaster programs. Heinrich and Luján also garnered additional support from U.S. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Shalanda Young, who included these programs in OMB's disaster supplemental request.

In November 2022, Heinrich and Luján [called on then Senate Appropriations Chair Patrick Leahy and Ranking Member Richard Shelby](#) to prioritize supplemental funding for the Emergency Watershed Protection Program and the Emergency Forest Restoration Program at levels that meet USDA estimates. N.M. Congressional Democrats successfully increased funding for these important programs.

While the fire was still ongoing, N.M. Congressional Democrats [secured 100 percent coverage of the Emergency Watershed Protection \(EWP\) program](#). Heinrich [requested that USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack take this action](#) during a key Senate Appropriations

Committee hearing in May 2022 and Leger Fernandez spoke to President Biden about it on his trip to New Mexico and reiterated her [request in a letter](#).