

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

**DELEGATION OFFICE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
(202) 224 - 8962**

June 19, 2024

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

Dear President Biden,

We respectfully request that you take immediate action on the recent request for a major disaster declaration from the State of New Mexico in response to the ongoing wildfires that started on Mescalero Apache Reservation on June 17, 2024. The State is requesting Public Assistance, Category A and B, including Direct Federal Assistance, and Individual Assistance for Lincoln County, Otero County, and Mescalero Apache Tribe. The State is requesting all parts of Individual Assistance, including Housing Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Transitional Sheltering Assistance, Serious Needs Assistance, Crisis Counseling, and Displacement Assistance. Additionally, the State is requesting Hazard Mitigation statewide. We ask that you expeditiously grant the major disaster declaration and make this federal assistance available as soon as possible for the State, the Mescalero Apache Tribe, and both Counties to have all the resources they need to mitigate and recover from the devastation of these wildfires.

Since June 17, 2024, the South Fork Fire and the Salt Fire in New Mexico have destroyed over 1,400 homes and businesses, and more than 8,000 New Mexicans have been forced to evacuate their communities, often with livestock and pets. Serious drought and windy conditions continue to make fire response challenging and the fires are threatening multiple populated areas. Fourteen shelters are currently supporting evacuees and there have been two confirmed fatalities since the disaster began. Federal assistance is of utmost urgency.

Due to the life and death nature of this crisis, we urge you to act without delay and approve the State of New Mexico's request for a major disaster declaration. It is imperative that the federal

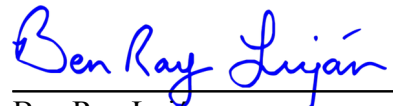
government provides full support to New Mexican communities to respond and recover from the devastation caused by these fires.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



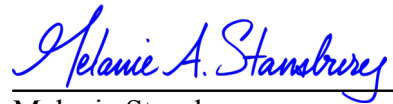
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



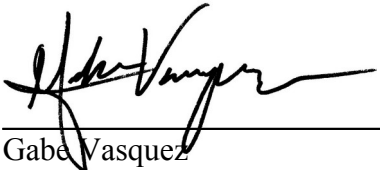
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress