

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow

Chair

U.S. Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry

328A Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell

Chair

U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation

254 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin III

Chair

U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources

304 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper

Chair

U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

410 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Gary Peters

Chair

U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs

340 Dirksen Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Brian Schatz

Chair

U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

838 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairs:

As you develop budget reconciliation legislation, we request that you include dedicated funding to address the wildfires and drought afflicting Western states in the U.S. Each of your Committees received instructions from the Senate Budget Committee to fund programs for climate change mitigation, resilience, and/or research. In the West, climate change has increased the severity and frequency of wildfires and caused record high temperatures and drought conditions. In order to adequately address the climate crisis and support Western communities, the reconciliation legislation must build on the success of the recently passed bipartisan infrastructure bill and expand investments in wildfire and drought programs.

As you know, wildfires continue to worsen each year and pose a threat to human health, personal property, wildlife, and our public lands. In 2020, nearly 60,000 wildfires burned more than 10.3 million acres and destroyed more than 17,000 structures. Over 90% of the West is currently experiencing drought, with the majority of areas subject to significantly below-average precipitation and extended dry periods. Unfortunately, this means that this wildfire season will likely once again be catastrophic.

Each of your committees has the opportunity to address the growing threat of wildfires and drought. Within your respective committee jurisdictions, we ask you to include the following provisions in reconciliation legislation:

- Funding for land management agencies to respond to and prevent further wildfires;
- Emergency support for state, local, and Tribal governments, and to assist water districts and other units of local government with emergency drought response needs;
- Wildfire and drought research and development of technologies, including desalination research and snowpack and evapotranspiration monitoring; and
- Funding to combat air and water pollution from wildfire smoke, and environmental drought funding.

We urge you to provide robust funding for programs across the federal government that will enable our communities to mitigate, respond, and recover from the wildfires and drought we are currently fighting.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



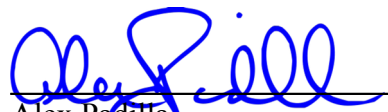
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



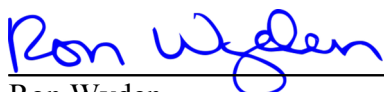
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator