

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

December 5, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

cc: Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator Brock Long and Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney

Dear Mr. President:

Due to historic wildfires in the State of Montana from August 10, 2017 to September 20, 2017, we respectfully request you declare a major disaster for this time period. We write in support of Governor Bullock's request for this declaration under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, so that Montana can make a full recovery.

This year's wildfire season was – by multiple measures – the most expansive in Montana's history. Many of the fires began in July, when Montana was undergoing its second driest year in state history. Dry lightning storms then sparked what became an historic wildfire season. Over the summer, more than two dozen major wildfires burned across Montana, with some wildfire complexes burning for months at a time. This year, Montana's wildfire season burned more than 1.27 million acres across the state. That is more than four times the average acreage burned over the last ten years.

Montana was able to mobilize thousands of firefighters across the State, but the severity of the wildfires required reinforcements from across the United States. Moreover, due to the severity of the wildfires, Governor Bullock mobilized troops from the Montana National Guard to assist these fire crews.

Natural disasters and emergencies of the last two years have far exceeded Montana's ability to pay for them. Floods, severe storms, and two major disaster declarations, including the costs of fighting wildfires, have also impacted the state's ability to respond to future disasters. According to the Governor's office and the Preliminary Damage Assessment, Montana has estimated costs to be \$44,857,686. This estimate includes federal contributions from Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) to address individual fire complexes. While these FMAGs will help defray the high costs eligible under these declarations, Public Assistance for category B (Emergency Protective Measures) for all of Montana's impacted counties and Indian reservations is necessary.

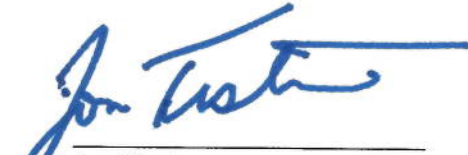
This year alone, we have funded tens of billions to assist Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands in their recovery, whether it through the Disaster Relief Fund, Community Development Block Grants, or Disaster Loan Assistance Programs. The relative

costs of fire recovery is small by comparison but such funds significantly amplify the state's ability to respond and recover.

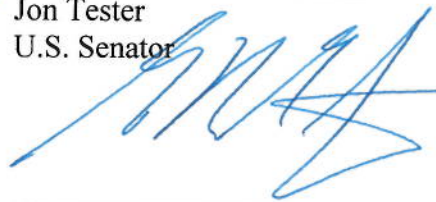
It is for those reasons that we request you grant Governor Bullock's request to declare a major disaster in all Montana counties and reservations impacted due to wildfires burning from August 10, 2017 to September 20, 2017.

We look forward to your response and stand ready to assist you in any way possible.

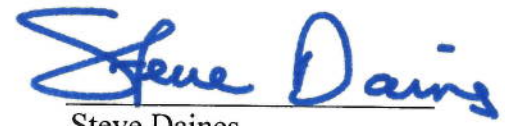
Sincerely,



Jon Tester
U.S. Senator



Greg Gianforte
U.S. Representative



Steve Daines
U.S. Senator