

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 13, 2020

The Honorable Peter T. Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Gaynor:

We write in support of a request submitted by California Office of Emergency Services (CalOES) Director Mark Ghilarducci that both Tulare County and Lassen County be added to the Presidential Major Disaster Declaration (FEMA-4558-DR-CA) issued on August 22, 2020 in order to make these areas eligible for Public Assistance (all categories) and Individual Assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for the SQF Complex Fire and the Northern Complex Fire.

On the morning of August 19, 2020, lightning struck in the Sequoia National Forest igniting the SQF Complex Fire in Tulare County. As of October 12th, this fire has burned over 167,000 acres and is only 70% contained. This fire has destroyed 171 residences and significantly damaged one more, resulting in approximately \$32.6 million in costs. The Northern Complex Fire in Lassen County started on August 17, 2020, has burned more than 318,000 acres, and is 94% contained as of yesterday. In addition to the physical damage these fires have caused, according to CalOES, they have also significantly impacted unemployment, including disproportionately adversely impacting low-income, elderly, and disabled individuals, in these counties. It is also our understanding that these fires have caused significant damage to public infrastructure that exceeds the \$3.84 Federal per county impact indicator for Public Assistance.

CalOES is requesting Individual Assistance, including disaster unemployment assistance and financial assistance for individuals who have lost their homes, to help our constituents adversely impacted by the SQF Complex Fire and the Northern Complex Fire rebuild their lives. The request also asks for Public Assistance to help local governments with both emergency work (Categories A and B) and permanent work (Categories C through G), enabling the Federal government to cover 75% of disaster-related recovery costs.

The initial Presidential Major Disaster Declaration included seven California counties, but was amended to include six additional counties as a result of new and ongoing fire activity in our state. Given the ongoing fire activity following the August 22nd declaration and based on data provided by CalOES that indicates both Tulare County and Lassen County meet necessary requirements under the Stafford Act for Individual Assistance and Public Assistance, we strongly support the request by CalOES to include these counties in President Trump's major disaster declaration FEMA-4558-DR-CA.

Please do not hesitate to contact us on this important request that will help our constituents rebuild their lives following the SQF Complex Fire and the Northern Complex Fire. Thank you for your attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



KEVIN McCARTHY
House Republican Leader



DEVIN NUNES
Member of Congress



DOUG LAMALFA
Member of Congress