

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 2, 2024

The Honorable Mike Johnson  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries  
Minority Leader  
U.S. Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson and Minority Leader Jeffries,

We urge you to include disaster relief funding in FY 2025 government spending. While we were disappointed that full disaster relief funding was not included in the three-month continuing resolution, we request that you support such funding in ongoing full-year appropriations negotiations. Disaster relief funding plays an essential role in supplying federal resources to areas impacted by natural disasters, such as wildfires, and it is our responsibility as lawmakers to ensure that our government is fully equipped to protect and rebuild our communities.

Multiple wildfires have burned throughout the state of California over the last year, depleting available resources. According to CalFire, 6,332 wildfires have burned almost 1 million acres this year alone, destroying homes and taking innocent lives. In Orange and Riverside Counties, the Airport Fire has burned over 23,500 acres of land in the last month. We fear that the number of wildfires and the damage they cause will only continue to increase later this year.

Federal assistance has supplemented state and local efforts to provide crucial disaster relief in the wake of these wildfires. For example, the Federal Emergency Management Administration's (FEMA's) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) provides key support for responding to natural disasters. The DRF funds programs like Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAGs), which allow the federal government to share the burden of fire mitigation and control costs. FEMA authorized FMAGs for several wildfires in California this year – including the Airport Fire – lessening the financial burden our state and local governments have been facing. Critical tools like FMAGs are made possible by federal disaster relief funding.

While we applaud the inclusion of \$20 billion towards the DRF in the continuing resolution, more funding is necessary for both the DRF and FEMA given the accumulation of backlogged costs the DRF must reimburse before addressing the many natural disasters Americans across the country currently face. Beyond the DRF, the U.S. Forest Service has faced ongoing staffing shortages in the Cleveland National Forest, where the Airport Fire began, during peak wildfire season. Furthermore, no new funding was included for other important disaster relief programs like the Small Business Administration's disaster loans and the Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program.

With the passage of a three-month continuing resolution without sufficient disaster relief funding, it is now even more vital for Congress to allocate necessary funding towards disaster relief programs so the federal government can provide adequate assistance to those impacted by natural disasters. We ask that you support full disaster relief funding as you negotiate FY 2025 government funding.

Sincerely,



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Young Kim  
Member of Congress



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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress



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J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress



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Mike Levin  
Member of Congress



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Michelle Steel  
Member of Congress