Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 14, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

Last month, the State of California experienced some of the worst wildfires in recent history. Combined with other fires throughout the state on Federal and non-Federal lands, as well as severe winter weather that resulted in flooding earlier this year, we believe it is critical to ensure the Federal government and California has the resources it needs to help expedite recovery efforts. Accordingly, we stand ready to work with you to ensure resources are made available to our constituents, communities, and state so life for our constituents and fellow neighbors in the Golden State gets back to normal as quickly as possible.

According to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), from the beginning of this year through October 29th, there have been over 8,000 fires that have burned more than 1.1 million acres of Federal and non-Federal lands in our state. At the height of the October Fire Siege, which started on October 8th, there were 21 major fires with 11,000 firefighters battling the blazes. These fires alone burned 245,000 acres, destroyed an estimated 8,900 homes and businesses, and forced the evacuation of 100,000 Californians from their homes and communities. Tragically, these fires also resulted in the deaths of 43 people.

Your swift action issuing a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the October Fire Siege helped ensure that Federal agencies could mobilize to help California combat these fires and help our communities recover by making Public Assistance and Individual Assistance available to impacted communities. This declaration also made these communities eligible for Small Business Administration Disaster Loan Programs.

As your Administration continues to work to develop a supplemental disaster funding package for Congress to consider, we strongly urge you to consider ensuring the following items are sufficiently funded to meet current and ongoing needs and are included in any request:

- FEMA Disaster Relief Fund: This fund is critical to ensuring California's impacted communities continue to have access to Individual Assistance (IA) and Public Assistance (PA) made available by Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-4344. With thousands of homes destroyed and critical infrastructure damaged, IA and PA are critical to helping get our communities back on their feet. As of November 8th, there have been nearly 4,000 IA approved registrations. The Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) also enables FEMA to do Mission Assignments – we believe it is important that one such Mission Assignment is for the Army Corps of Engineers or the appropriate Federal

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agency to expeditiously remove debris so the rebuilding process can begin as soon as possible – and provide Fire Management Assistance Grants. Ensuring the DRF is well-funded is important to our state's recovery;

- SBA Disaster Loan Programs: The October Fire Siege also resulted in the destruction of thousands of businesses. SBA Business Physical Disaster (BPD) Loans and Economic Injury Disaster (EID) Loans will be crucial to helping California's entrepreneurs return to business as normal. Ensuring there are sufficient funds for these programs, as well as for SBA Home Physical Disaster (HPD) Loans, all made available by Presidential Disaster Declaration DR-4344, provide additional assistance to our state. Furthermore, we believe that the $2 million cap on BPD and EID Loans and the $200,000 cap on HPD Loans should be temporarily suspended to help Californians, given the high cost of doing business and living in our state;

- USDA Disaster Programs: California is the nation's leading agriculture producing state, and the October Fire Siege resulted in significant damage to our state's farmland, rangeland, and watersheds. The USDA Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) and the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) are important programs that help our farmers, ranchers and viticulturists after natural disasters. ECP helps rehabilitate farmland adversely impacted by natural disasters and EWPP helps with disaster cleanup and recovery activities. We must ensure that these fires do not result in lasting negative impacts to California agriculture, which feeds the U.S. and the world; and,

- US DOT Emergency Relief Program: California's highway infrastructure provides safe evacuation routes, allows emergency goods to be delivered, and first responders access to those in need. Many roadways that were impacted by the wildfires require immediate repair and permanent reconstruction. The US DOT Emergency Relief (ER) Program provides reimbursement for state cost shares of emergency repairs and construction to the highway and interstate systems. In addition to the damage from the October Fire Siege, California is eligible for considerable reimbursement from the aforementioned winter storms (Federal Highway Administration code CA17-2) earlier this year. To ensure California's infrastructure is intact and repaired expeditiously, the US DOT ER Program should be adequately funded.

In addition, we believe it is important that the Administration consider extraordinary measures to help California recover given the current extraordinary circumstances. Along those lines, we would strongly support the Administration requesting targeted tax relief for victims of the October Fire Siege, similar to how the Administration supported these efforts for Hurricane Harvey, Irma, and Maria victims in Title V of the Disaster Tax Relief and Airport and Airway Extension Act of 2017 (Public Law 115-63). The request would be in addition to unilateral relief measures that the Internal Revenue Service made on October 13, 2017.

We understand that the Administration is working with the State of California to refine its supplemental disaster funding request of Congress. The above items are by no means an exhaustive list, but we believe an important first step to ensuring our state continues to move toward recovery. We request an immediate submission to Congress for supplemental resources. As this process continues, we look forward to working with you and your Administration to help make the Golden State golden again.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

KEVIN McCARTHY
House Majority Leader

JEFF DENHAM
Member of Congress

DAVID G. VALADAO
Member of Congress

STEVE KNIGHT
Member of Congress

ED ROYCE
Member of Congress

TOM MCCLINTOCK
Member of Congress

DANA ROHRABACHER
Member of Congress

MIMI WALTERS
Member of Congress

PAUL COOK
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DOUG LAMALFA
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