

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3203

October 22, 2020

General Daniel R. Hokanson
Chief of the National Guard Bureau
1636 Defense Pentagon
Arlington, VA 20301-1636

Dear General Hokanson:

As devastating fires of historic proportion continue to ravage the United States, we ask you to provide us an assessment of the National Guard's ability to prepare for, respond to, and help state firefighting forces recover from wildfires. A frank estimation will help Congress address any gaps and use every resource available to respond to this year's fires. It will also help us better resource and equip the Guard for a future in which human-driven climate change will make fire seasons increasingly severe and destructive.

Fighting fires is a complex mission that involves state, local, and federal officials and many different agencies. National Guard members who assist may be operating under Title 10, Title 32, State Active Duty, or outside of their state pursuant to an Emergency Management Assistance Compact between governors. Guard members must have the appropriate training, personnel numbers, and equipment needed to fulfill their missions, regardless of their status, because Americans are counting on them to succeed in the moment.

To that end we ask that you provide us your assessment of the current state of the National Guard's ability to prepare for wildfires, help respond to them, and aid in the recovery. Please include the following:

- An availability of appropriately trained personnel and equipment for firefighting-related needs.
- An accounting of the capacity available through Emergency Management Assistance Compacts and whether you believe expanding them may provide additional opportunities or wildfire capacity.
- Any National Guard Bureau plans or constructs developed with governors for coordinated regional response.

We urge you to be candid both about any current challenges and any gaps you think will emerge as increasingly destructive wildfire seasons put greater demands on the National Guard.

We commend all the heroic men and women of the National Guard who have been responding to raging wildfires as part of a federal, state, and local effort. With a more complete understanding of the Guard's ability to respond, we can ensure proper resourcing and will be better able to keep our Guard members always ready and always there.

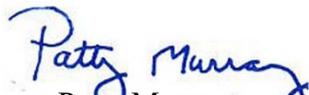
Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Tom Udall
United States Senator



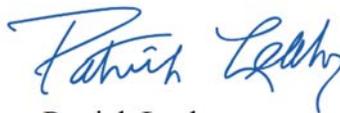
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Patrick Leahy
United States Senator



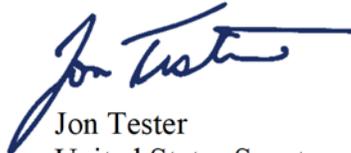
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Jon Tester
United States Senator

/s/

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator