

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 19, 2024

The Honorable Deb Haaland,  
Secretary, United States Department of Interior  
1849 C Street NW  
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

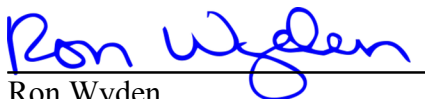
We write in support of Governor Kotek's request to the Department of Interior (DOI) for emergency use authorizations for temporary, alternative grazing areas and flexibility in grazing schedules on BLM-administered lands, as appropriate. We also support her request for holistic landscape recovery under the Burned Area Emergency Response Program and Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration.

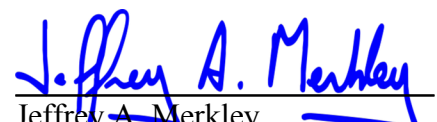
Oregon is suffering a historically challenging fire season, with dry and abundant fuels, soaring temperatures, and dangerous weather leading to deadly, megafires across the state. These megafires have burned more than a million acres of public and private lands with record setting ferocity, including rural ranches, livestock and grazing allotments.

The grazing flexibility requested by Governor Kotek will be an incredibly important lifeline to our rural communities that have been devastated by these wildfire disasters. Without it, many ranchers will undoubtedly find it impossible to afford to provide for surviving livestock and keep their family-run operations viable. We have already written to Secretary Vilsack in support of Governor Kotek's request for a Secretarial Disaster Designation. That declaration will make available the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) disaster program, including authorization of emergency haying and grazing and other potential flexibilities. We believe that assistance from the DOI would significantly increase the effectiveness of this aid from USDA.

We urge you to prioritize timely assistance to Oregon from the DOI by providing the operational grazing flexibility and recovery assistance requested by Governor Kotek in response to Oregon's current wildfire disaster. Together, we can ensure that these rural communities receive the federal support they need to recover and continue to play a critical role as important partners for natural resource management.

Sincerely,

  
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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

  
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator