

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20510

July 7, 2021

The Honorable Deborah Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, Northwest  
Washington, DC, 20240

The Honorable Thomas J. Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington DC, 20250

Dear Secretary Haaland and Secretary Vilsack:

We write concerning your agencies' preparations for the 2021 wildfire seasons.

As you know, Oregon, and the rest of the West, experienced an unprecedented and destructive wildfire season in 2020. More than 50,000 fires burned 10 million acres with fires lasting well into the fall. Already fires and smoke have threatened the health and safety of several communities in Oregon. We appreciate the steps that you have taken to prepare for the 2021 wildfire season. The recent announcement of federal resources from the administration is welcome news, and we encourage you to continue to appropriately plan and prepare for what is likely to be a difficult wildfire season.

In order to better understand your efforts to prepare and respond to wildfires, we ask that you respond to the following questions:

- What will be the cumulative impact of recently proposed personnel changes to overall readiness levels? What other steps have your agencies taken to ensure sufficient personnel are in place for this fire season?
- What steps are you taking to appropriately pre-position resources?
- How are your agencies coordinating with the Department of Defense and state National Guards to integrate their resources into the coordinated wildfire response?
- How have your agencies ensured that there are sufficient aviation assets available? How many additional aviation resources do you have available this year compared to last year?
- How are your agencies collaborating with state and local agencies to ensure a coordinated response to mitigate wildfire risk and help communities prepare?
- How are your agencies coordinating with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to integrate and deploy advanced sensor technologies to improve your ability to detect, predict, and respond to wildfires?
- How are your agencies coordinating with the Environmental Protection Agency to help prepare and respond to wildfire smoke?

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Thank you for your attention to this issue and your efforts to help Oregon recover and prepare for wildfire season.

Sincerely,



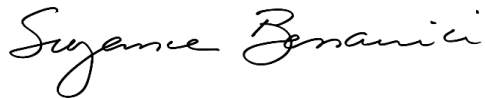
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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Cliff Bentz  
Member of Congress



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Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress



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Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress