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JOINT COMMITTEE ON TAXATION

September 5, 2017

Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

Right now hundreds of thousands of acres are burning across Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Nevada, and Utah. More than 7.65 million acres of forests have burned this year alone.

The governors of many of these states have declared states of emergency due to the severity of these wildfires. There are more than 27,700 people fighting fires in the West and firefighters have been sent from states across the country to battle these fires. This is truly a national natural disaster on the scale of hurricanes, tornadoes or floods.

Fires in the West will always be a part of the western landscape, but they are burning hotter, longer and more severely due to the effects of climate change. The reality is that by providing more funding to reduce hazardous fuel loads in our nation's forests we can get ahead of these disasters and reduce the length of fire seasons.

But that effort requires a change in how the government funds wildfire fighting. The federal government must provide more consistent funding for hazardous fuel treatments that will reduce the severity of the fires that burn in our forests. By funding forest projects that reduce the severity of wildfire fuels, land managers can better predict an otherwise unpredictable situation.

I was glad to see you send a request to Congress to provide aid for the victims of Hurricane Harvey. There is no question Congress must help people rebuild their homes and lives in the wake of this disaster. We must come together in a bipartisan way in Congress to do everything possible to provide relief for the victims of Harvey's devastation.

Natural disasters have untold and unpredictable effects on people's lives, families, homes and businesses. It is the unpredictability of the size, scope, and duration of these events and their aftermath that makes the recovery effort as daunting as the event itself.

As the long recovery begins in Houston and the surrounding areas, I ask that you also include a wildfire funding fix in any disaster aid request you send to Congress. It is long past time to address the ongoing, devastating natural disaster of wildfires raging across western states.

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In Congress we have been discussing this effort for a number of years and have introduced several proposed solutions, including the Wildfire Disaster Funding Act and a similar funding fix included in legislation to reauthorize the National Flood Insurance Program. As we work to address natural disasters on a national scale, it is critical that wildfire be a part of those solutions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Wyden". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator