Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2007

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you know, beginning October 21, 2007, Southern California has been ravaged by wildfires causing the evacuation of hundreds of thousands of individuals, damaging an overwhelming acreage of land and properties and causing devastation throughout seven counties. We write to thank you for your swift response to Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's October 22, 2007, request to issue an Emergency Declaration for California due to the Southern California Wildfires. Providing all available federal resources to partner with state and local efforts is absolutely critical, and we greatly appreciate your immediate action.

In anticipation of a forthcoming request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Southern California, we ask that you have the necessary federal agencies within the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), in particular the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), at the ready to expedite this request. We also ask that you work to expedite any other requests for Individual Assistance, Public Assistance and Hazard Mitigation Grant Assistance or expansion of the current Emergency Declaration.

There are currently 15 fires burning in the counties of Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego, Santa Barbara and Ventura. As of this morning, reports indicate that over 300,000 people have been forced to evacuate, approximately 290,000 acres of land have burned and over 1,000 homes and properties have been destroyed. As conditions are constantly changing with the severity of the Santa Ana winds, and the assessment of damage continues to grow, it is imperative that the federal emergency response agencies continue to coordinate with the Governor's office and the California Office of Emergency Services (OES) to provide the necessary resources to the men and women fighting these fires on the ground as well as to those providing emergency shelter and recovery efforts.

Again, we thank you for your prompt attention and action on this crisis. We stand ready to work with you to provide this much-needed assistance and support.

Sincerely,

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Henry A. Waxman

Bob Filner

Jerry Lewis

Brad Sherman

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon

Joe Baca

Elton Gallegly

Brian P. Bilbray

Doris O. Matsui

Zoe Lofgren

John Campbell

Gary G. Miller

Mary Bono

Susan Davis

Ken Calvert

Sam Farr

Dan Rohrabacher

Laura Richardson

Ed Royce

Jim Moran

George Radanovich

Mike Ross

Kevin McCarthy

Diane E. Watson

John T. Doolittle

Michael M. Honda

Wally Herger

Lois Capps

Devin Nunes

Ellen Tauscher

Doris O. Matsui

Linda T. Sánchez

Mike Thompson

Hanna Rosen

Nancy Pelosi

George Miller

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Dan Lungren

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Lucille Roybal-Allard

Jane Harman

Mary Bono

Tom Lantos

Barbara Lee

Loretta Sanchez

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Howard L. Berman

Lynn C. Woolsey