

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0505

July 1, 2008

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
221 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
230 Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-131 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-146A Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senators Reid, McConnell, Byrd and Cochran:

California is already facing another catastrophic fire season, even though many of our communities are still recovering from last year's fires. As you may know, last week a swarm of dry lightning storms sparked hundreds of fires across drought-ridden land in California. Currently more than 19,000 firefighters are facing over 1,000 fires burning across more than 379,000 acres of public and private land, threatening lives and threatening homes.

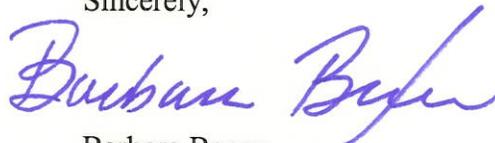
As you know, the Supplemental Appropriations bill passed by the Senate on May 22nd included \$450 million to support the U.S. Forest Service and Interior Department firefighting and fire-prevention efforts. This emergency funding would have brought federal wildfire funding efforts in line with federal spending on firefighting and fire-prevention in recent years. Unfortunately, this funding was not included in the final version of the bill.

When the Senate Appropriations Committee begins consideration of legislation to address critical domestic priorities in the coming weeks, I urge you to include additional funding for firefighting and fire-prevention efforts in this legislation.

The current emergency in California makes it clearer than ever that it is past time to refocus our resources on the real problems we have here at home. The urgent need for funding to support efforts to fight and prevent fires is one of the many problems that must be addressed as soon as possible.

I thank you for your consideration of this request to support the efforts of the thousands of firefighters and emergency responders who are assisting the communities in California that are struggling in the face of this crisis.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator