

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

July 10, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

With over 300 fires still actively burning in California, we write to request that you immediately allocate additional resources to assist with ongoing firefighting efforts throughout our state.

Governor Schwarzenegger has informed us that an additional 41 helicopters, 302 hand crews, 616 fire engines, and 773 support personnel are urgently needed to help the thousands of Federal, State, local, and volunteer fire fighters who are working so hard to protect our communities from these dangerous fires.

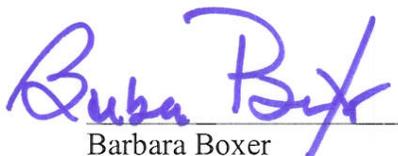
The Governor has also said that he may call up as many as 2,000 members of the National Guard in addition to the over 1,000 members that are currently supporting fire fighting activities. In order to ensure that our National Guard is ready for this mission, we request that the Administration make available out-of-state Federal firefighters to help train National Guard members for fire fighting duties. Active fire crews are currently being taken away from the front lines of fires to train National Guard members, but if Federal personnel were on scene to help train new arrivals, crews could continue to fight active fires.

We also request that the U.S. Forest Service's Maximum Efficiency Level be immediately increased to 100 percent for the current fire season in California. This will allow Federal incident commanders to make tactical firefighting decisions as needed to protect lives and homes without having to receive prior approval from the Office of Management and Budget.

This unprecedented start to the fire season in California has put incredible stress on the State's resources and on the brave men and women fighting these fires. While the support provided by the Administration has been very helpful thus far, the severity of the ongoing fires and the strong potential for more fires indicates an urgent need for additional resources and support.

The residents of California need the Administration's continued assistance and cooperation. Failure to act would put lives and property in grave danger.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator