Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

August 14, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

We write to request that you upgrade the current emergency declaration in our State to a major disaster declaration in the wake of the devastation wrought by recent wildfires. The additional services and funding made available through this Federal assistance will be critical to the recovery of the affected California counties.

To date, 2,096 fires have burned over 1.3 million acres in our State, and 11 fires continue to burn, threatening lives and property. The total cost of these fires has placed a heavy burden on California's financial resources with estimated costs of more than $175 million. It is only mid-August and the historical peak of the California fire season is yet to come.

As you know, on August 13, 2008, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger requested that you upgrade your emergency declaration to a major disaster declaration under the Stafford Act. We respectfully urge you to declare a major disaster for our State. This extension of emergency resources will provide much needed relief to the more than 300 California families who have already lost their homes and help defray the costs that State and local governments have incurred to fight these fires and will incur recovering from them.

We also believe that the Governor's request to retroactively extend the declaration to May 22, 2008 will more accurately reflect the beginning of this disaster.

Please know that we will continue to do our part to provide additional resources for fire suppression activities, helping to ensure that disasters like this are prevented in the future.

Thank you for your consideration and continued support during this difficult fire season.

Sincerely,

Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator

Barbara Boxer
United States Senator

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Wally Herger
Member of Congress

David Dreier
Member of Congress

George P. Radanovich
Member of Congress

George Miller
Member of Congress

Brian P. Bilbray
Member of Congress

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Kevin McCarthy
Member of Congress

Darrell E. Issa
Member of Congress

Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress