

MARK DESAULNIER
11TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND
THE WORKFORCE

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION AND
INFRASTRUCTURE

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

115 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
PHONE: (202) 225-2095
FAX: (202) 225-5609

3100 OAK ROAD, SUITE 110
WALNUT CREEK, CA 94597
PHONE: (925) 933-2660
FAX: (925) 933-2677

440 CIVIC CENTER PLAZA, 2ND FLOOR
RICHMOND, CA 94804
PHONE: (510) 620-1000
FAX: (510) 620-1005

January 15, 2019

The Honorable Sonny Perdue
Secretary of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

The Honorable Vicki Christiansen
Chief, U.S. Forest Service
Sidney R. Yates Federal Building
201 14th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Perdue and Chief Christiansen:

I am writing to request that your agency give full attention and fair prioritization to areas of California facing significant risk of wildfires that are also close to suburban and urban population centers. As the recent, devastating wildfires in California have made clear, the threat of wildfires is now a state-wide issue and one that is only increasing as the impacts of dramatic weather-related events continue to unfold. In addition to responding to our current emergencies, we must move quickly to mitigate risks in advance of future fires. Thank you also to the Forest Service wildfire teams for working with state and local firefighters to halt the wildfires in California this year.

As you know, legislation enacted into law last year (Sec. 210 of P.L. 115-141) directed you to undertake wildfire hazard severity mapping for communities for areas that are "adjacent to National Forest System lands" or "affected by wildland fire, as determined by the Secretary." I urge you, in your consideration of areas to be prioritized for this effort, to recognize the importance of addressing wildfire risks near urban population centers and to work with the communities and stakeholders of Contra Costa County and the East Bay of the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although this area is not home to lands under the National Forest System, the area remains at the highest wildfire alert and is equally as vulnerable to wildfires with potential impacts on large, densely-populated communities. I further request that you inform me of the current status of your work under Section 210 of P.L. 115-141, your current timeline for carrying out and completing this work, and your plans for reaching out to and including communities like the East Bay.

I request a response to this request no later than February 12, 2019. Thank you for your consideration, and I look forward to working with you in this important initiative for identifying and mitigating wildfire risks in our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark DeSaulnier", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress