

United States Senate

August 20, 2020

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Ranking Member
Energy and Natural Resources Committee
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Manchin,

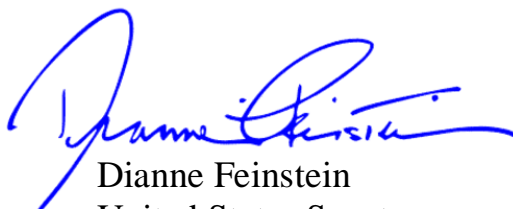
Given the severe wildfire threat facing California and the West, we write to request that the Energy Committee hold a hearing as soon as possible on our bipartisan “Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act of 2020.”

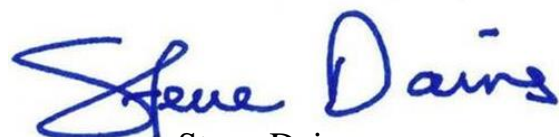
Our states are currently experiencing severe wildfires, which have only been exacerbated by the challenges of fighting these natural disasters during COVID-19. In California, record-breaking heat and an unprecedented 10,849 lightning strikes have caused more than 367 new fires in just a matter of days.

Our “Emergency Wildfire and Public Safety Act” (S. 4431) would provide federal agencies with the tools they need to reduce hazardous fuel loads, protect communities in the Wildland Urban Interface, and support forestry jobs, biomass development, and smarter energy practices. S. 4431 is the result of extensive stakeholder engagement, outreach across party lines, and months of deliberations to ensure a truly bipartisan, pragmatic approach to reduce the risk of wildfire. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbates the public health risks caused by wildfire smoke providing a new urgency to this issue.

Given that the National Wildfire Preparedness Level has increased to Level 4, and California and Montana are in the midst of yet another challenging wildfire season, it is critical that a hearing be held on this bill as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration and for the attention your staff has already offered to this legislation.

Sincerely,


Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator


Steve Daines
United States Senator