

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, D.C. 20510**

September 29, 2025

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We strongly support Governor Jared Polis's request on September 26, 2025 for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration and Public Assistance for Rio Blanco County, Colorado, in response to the devastating Lee and Elk wildfires that burned across the state in 2025. As part of this request, Governor Polis has also requested the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program for the affected county.

Colorado communities in Rio Blanco County have suffered significant losses as a result of severe wildland fire, including significant debris and mud flows that occurred from August 2nd through August 29, 2025. Combined, the Lee Fire (approximately 138,000 acres) and the Elk Fire (approximately 15,000 acres) – and the associated debris flows and mud slides – destroyed homes, buildings, transportation infrastructure, thousands of acres of rangeland used for livestock production, and caused extensive damage to oil and gas and rural electric transmission infrastructure.

Governor Polis has requested a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for the period from August 2 through August 29, 2025. Rio Blanco County has suffered damages severe enough to qualify for the Public Assistance Program. Successful recovery is essential to restoring the County's economy, which depends on oil and gas, agriculture, outdoor recreation, and hunting and fishing. Without additional support, residents could face increased electricity costs, oil and gas production could slow, and important habitat and grazing lands could be lost. In addition, residents face ongoing hazards from the fire, including debris, burned trees, and threats to water quality and drinking water infrastructure.

Data shows that eligible damages in Rio Blanco County total more than \$27,491,000. In this rural county, these losses total approximately \$4,000 per person.

As you are aware, a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration unlocks a number of federal assistance programs and allows local governments, homeowners, and businesses to be eligible

for loans, insurance relief, and other assistance. These communities urgently need this relief to rebuild. We thank you in advance for your expedited review and approval of the Governor's request for a Major Disaster Declaration.

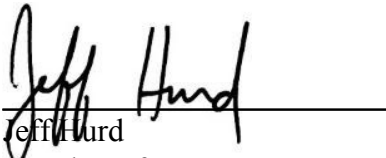
Sincerely,



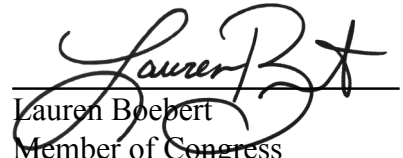
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper  
United States Senator



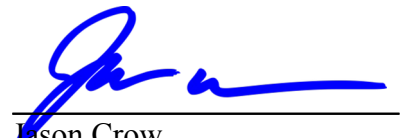
Jeff Hurd  
Member of Congress



Lauren Boebert  
Member of Congress



Jeff Crank  
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Jason Crow  
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Diana DeGette  
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Gabe Evans  
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Joe Neguse  
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Brittany Pettersen  
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