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May 12, 2022

Ms. Deanne Criswell
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C. St., SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Administrator Criswell:

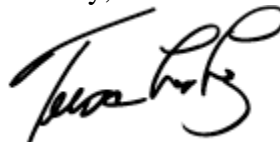
I write today to urge you to extend the application deadline for Critical Needs Assistance (CNA) related to the ongoing wildfires currently raging in New Mexico.

As you know, President Biden granted a Major Disaster Declaration for New Mexico on May 4. I am grateful that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) approved CNA in conjunction with the disaster declaration. CNA provides a one-time \$500 payment for eligible impacted households to cover immediate needs. That can include life-saving and essential supplies, including water, food, first aid, prescriptions, infant formula, diapers, consumable medical supplies, durable medical equipment, personal hygiene items, and fuel for transportation. CNA was only activated earlier this week. But, affected individuals are currently required to apply for FEMA assistance before May 17, 2022 to receive CNA. That is a mere five days from now. People are just barely hearing about the benefit.

More importantly, the Hermit's Peak/Calf Canyon Fire has no defined end date. The U.S. Forest Service has made clear that the fire will likely burn until late July. Firefighters are doing everything they can to control the wildfire, but high winds and dry conditions make near-term containment impossible. In fact, containment recently dropped. There will likely be additional evacuations for the foreseeable future, leaving many evacuated members of my beautiful communities unable to apply for CNA before the deadline. We do not know what the fire will look like in a week or how many additional people will be evacuated or lose their homes, property, or land.

Given that this is a developing emergency, it is essential that FEMA provide New Mexicans equal access to this program. An arbitrary deadline cannot dictate eligibility for such important funds during an ongoing crisis. I urge you to extend the deadline for CNA to ensure everyone has access to life-saving resources regardless of when they are affected. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress