

STEVE KNIGHT
25TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

HOUSE ARMED
SERVICES COMMITTEE

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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0525

July 26, 2016

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Governor Jerry Brown
Office of the Governor
State Capitol, 1st Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

I am writing to request that you declare a state of emergency for the State of California as a result of the wildfire in Santa Clarita Valley that began burning on July 22, 2016 and continues to destroy property and threaten lives in Los Angeles County.

As of this morning, the west Angeles National Forest fire, also known as the Sand Fire, has burned over 35,000 acres, forced the evacuation of more than 10,000 homes, and displaced over 20,000 people. We've seen 18 structures destroyed, and one tragic fatality. Despite coordinated efforts by the Los Angeles County Fire Department, Los Angeles County Sheriff, and National Park Service, only 10% of the fire is currently contained and the blaze poses an immediate threat to thousands of homes and families in the Cresenta Valley, the San Fernando Valley, the Antelope Valley, and the Santa Clarita Valley. The Federal Government has acknowledged the severity and scale of this natural disaster by declaring it the country's number one fire priority.

The historic drought Los Angeles County is enduring this year has created disastrous conditions for managing wildfires. At the peak of our region's dry season and in these extraordinary times, a fire that may have been manageable for the county to combat on its own in previous years will require at least 3,000 firefighters, hundreds of engines, and the requisition of several high schools, a recreation center, a fairground, and a couple equestrian centers to be used as shelters for residents and their animals.

The Sand Fire threatens to compound the economic effects of the drought while inflicting tremendous stress on public resources and individual families who are displaced from their communities. I urgently and respectfully request that you declare a state of emergency to allow the state and federal governments to start taking the necessary steps to mitigate the economic damage and start the recovery process. Thank you for your consideration of my request and I look forward to your reply.

Sincerely,

STEVE KNIGHT
Member of Congress