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May 16, 2022

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-221 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
S-230 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader McConnell:

Western Governors understand that S. 3092, the FEMA Improvement Reform and Efficiency Act of 2021 (FIRE Act), is advancing and write to express our support for certain components of this bill. Western Governors' collective disaster preparedness and response policy is contained in Western Governors Association (WGA) Policy Resolution 2021-06, *Disaster Preparedness and Response*.

Policy Resolution 2021-06 contains Governors' policy statements directly aligning with the service improvements, equity provisions, and calls for further research included in the bill. Specifically, the resolution states that federal efforts to prepare for, mitigate against, respond to, and recover from natural disasters must be inclusive, equitable, and accessible in order to be useful to disaster victims. S. 3092 contains provisions and programs which satisfy these goals. Sections 7 and 8, for example, directly address cultural barriers affecting the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) ability to adequately respond to community needs in post-disaster circumstances.

Western Governors also support reexamining the standards used to determine the provision of assistance to homeowners and access to federal aid. This principle is expressed in Section 12 of the bill, which requires the FEMA Administrator to brief the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee on the merits of adjusting these standards according to the regional cost of living. Additionally, Governors' policy emphasizes the expansion of pre-disaster mitigation programs to minimize the effects of natural disasters. The provisions contained in Section 4 of the FIRE Act take an important step towards wildfire risk mitigation on days with Red Flag Warnings.

As uncharacteristic wildfires become increasingly frequent and severe, it is important that FEMA is adequately positioned to respond to fire emergencies and assist affected communities. We appreciate your efforts to better equip the agency to respond to evolving threats, and we look forward to working with you as the FIRE Act continues to advance through the legislative process.

Sincerely,



Brad Little  
Governor of Idaho  
Chair, WGA



Jared Polis  
Governor of Colorado  
Vice Chair, WGA

cc: The Honorable Alex Padilla