

JOE NEGUSE
2ND DISTRICT, COLORADO



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
THE JUDICIARY

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
NATURAL RESOURCES

SELECT COMMITTEE ON
CLIMATE CRISIS

March 25, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
2167 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

I write to thank you for your commitment to rebuilding America's infrastructure, and to request the inclusion of my *Climate Resilient Communities Act* (H.R. 1936) and *Wildfire Recovery Act* (H.R. 1066) in the upcoming infrastructure package.

As we work to continue to provide relief to American families and workers to recover from the Coronavirus, or COVID-19, pandemic, the next important step in this process is the Build Back Better infrastructure plan. Investments in infrastructure pose a unique and important opportunity to invest in and rebuild our economy, and I thank you for this important work.

Many of our communities are still struggling amid the pandemic, and additionally grappling with the devastating effects of climate change and horrible natural disasters. In 2020, the first and second largest wildfires in Colorado history burned in my district and destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres. While crafting this infrastructure package, we must ensure we prioritize action against climate change, as we know climate change will continue to increase the number and scope of natural disasters like the fires that took place across the West.

My bill, the *Climate Resilient Communities Act*, would commission a Government Accountability Office (GAO) study to report on the benefits to prioritizing resiliency at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). This legislation would provide us with critical information about the building codes and standards currently utilized in FEMA's federal programs, and recommendations for how to improve those building codes to take into account resiliency and prepare for future natural disasters and efforts to rebuild. I was glad to work with your committee to include this bill as an amendment to *The Moving Forward Act* last summer.

As a result of these devastating fires, particularly in addition to COVID-19, communities in my district have expressed concern about their ability to meet the state and local match requirements for the Fire Management Assistance Grant (FMAG) program at FEMA. This program provides support for states and local governments to cover eligible firefighting costs related to wildfires, such as field camps, equipment and materials used, at a 75 percent federal, 25 percent state and local cost share. *The Wildfire Recovery Act* would allow for flexibility in that federal cost share and would direct FEMA to issue guidance identifying damage thresholds where the cost share could be raised above 75 percent. This would provide important assistance to state and local governments who are working to recover from these disasters and deal with the associated costs, while also still combatting the COVID-19 pandemic.

I thank you for your incredible leadership crafting *The Moving Forward Act* last year and working on the next infrastructure package this spring. I urge you to consider including both of these important pieces of legislation as a part of that package. Thank you for your consideration of these requests, and I look forward to continuing to work with you to rebuild America's infrastructure.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Neguse", with a stylized, cursive script.

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress