

Friday, July 1, 2011

*Santa Fe, NM – Congressman Ben Ray Luján and Senators Tom Udall and Jeff Bingaman sent a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency today requesting support for more counties and pueblos that have been impacted by the Las Conchas fire.*

*Below is the text of the letter:*

July 1, 2011

William Craig Fugate  
Director  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
500 C Street SW, Washington, D.C. 20472

Tony Russell  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region VI  
Federal Regional Center  
800 North Loop 288  
Denton, TX 76201-3698

Dear Mr. Fugate and Mr. Russell:

Thank you for your attention to the ongoing emergency fire situation in New Mexico. We appreciate your rapid response to the governor's request for fire management assistance declaration for the Las Conchas Fire that started in Sandoval County, but has since spread into several surrounding counties and onto the Santa Clara Pueblo Reservation. As of this morning, the fire is just 3% contained, approximately 104,000 acres have burned and it is the largest fire

in New Mexico history.

As this massive fire continues to spread through the unprecedentedly dry forests and canyons of New Mexico, the FEMA fire management assistance declaration will need to be expanded to include tribes and counties beyond Sandoval County who are also experiencing significant loss and damage. For example, the fire continues to burn Santa Clara Pueblo lands. It has reportedly reached within 10 miles of the village of Santa Clara and continues to burn closer, having already consumed forest lands on most of the western half of the reservation containing numerous cultural and natural resources.

With major watersheds, forest, and even structures burning, and communities unable to continue typical day to day functions, we urge you to work with the state, local, and tribal governments to determine the need and expand the reach of FEMA fire management assistance to the increasing number of tribes and counties being impacted by the Las Conchas Fire. Thank you for your attention and swift action on behalf of the tribes and counties in New Mexico.

Sincerely,

Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Jeff Bingaman  
United States Senator

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress

# # #