

United States Senate

March 10, 2026

The Honorable James D. Vance
Vice President of the United States
Number One Observatory Circle
U.S. Naval Observatory
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Vice President Vance:

As President Trump made clear in his State of the Union address, the levels of waste, fraud, and abuse being exposed in Democrat-run states like Minnesota and California is appalling. Even worse, under Joe Biden's failed leadership, this was normalized in a system that too often traded transparency and accountability for what benefited the far-left's latest passion projects. The result was hardworking American taxpayers being cheated out of billions of dollars and losing all trust in their federal government to put them first.

That changed on President Trump's first day in office when the reckless waste, fraud, and abuse met its match. The Trump administration has been laser-focused on spending American tax dollars wisely and restoring accountability and fiscal responsibility to our government at every level. As you know from our time serving together in the United States Senate, I am a proud partner in this mission. I know you share this commitment, and I was glad that President Trump put you in charge of the newly created anti-fraud task force, establishing much-needed oversight as to how federal tax dollars are being spent.

This accountability and oversight are needed urgently in California. Despite receiving billions in federal taxpayer dollars for wildfire mitigation, California continues to experience historic wildfires, including the devastating Pacific Palisades Fire last January. After visiting the Pacific Palisades last year and seeing the damage and hearing from victims firsthand, Senator Ron Johnson, Chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs' Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations, and I were shocked by the failures of California's state and local officials to prepare and combat the fire, keep residents safe, and aid in their recovery. As a result, we immediately began an investigation.

That fire killed twelve people, destroyed thousands of homes, and devastated countless families and their communities. Today, victims, Californians, and the American people still have little to no answers. The American people deserve to know whether federal funds were appropriately and for their intended purpose, and if not, the extent to which any fraud, waste, and abuse affected public officials' ability to keep people safe that day and facilitate a quick recovery.

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For this reason, I sent letters to multiple agencies, including the DOJ¹, DHS², USDA³, DOI⁴, and DOT⁵ requesting information on how much federal taxpayer money has been sent to California for fire prevention and recovery efforts over the last decade. I also met with Attorney General Pam Bondi to emphasize the importance of a thorough review of how California used disaster funding, so victims receive the answers they deserve. I am grateful to see that under President Trump's leadership, these agencies are taking this seriously, and I know you will too.

President Trump has already taken action to help the fire victims by intervening where state and local governments failed, ensuring proper oversight of federal funds, and preventing regulatory roadblocks from impeding Californians' recovery. As I wrote to several Cabinet members last year, California has "received seemingly endless flows of federal funds" related to wildfires that "do not appear to have been used wisely,"⁶ so this enhanced oversight is needed to make sure federal aid is disbursed effectively and efficiently.

As the federal government seeks to play a role in preventing the next wildfire and the Federal Emergency Management Agency steps in to help victims, we must ensure that every tax dollar is spent appropriately and is accounted for. For the sake of American taxpayers and the victims, I urge you to examine past federal spending and ensure accountability in California's rebuilding and future wildfire prevention efforts.

President Trump has restored trust in our federal government again, and your task force has a real opportunity to build on this work by sending a clear message to failed state and local politicians: waste, fraud, and abuse are no longer acceptable in California or anywhere across our great country.

Sincerely,



Rick Scott
United States Senator

¹ Letter to Attorney General Bondi (Aug. 22, 2025), <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/services/files/5801E482-6BC0-47F8-9AC9-9BA7F11212B3>

² Letter to Sec. Noem (Aug. 26, 2025), <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/2025/8/sen-rick-scott-to-dhs-we-must-review-ca-disaster-funding-after-state-and-local-botched-response-to-wildfires>

³ Letter to Sec. Rollins (Aug. 28, 2025), <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/2025/8/sen-rick-scott-to-usda-we-must-review-ca-disaster-funding-after-state-and-local-botched-response-to-wildfires>

⁴ Letter to Sec. Burgum (Sept. 3, 2025), <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/2025/9/sen-rick-scott-in-letter-to-doi-we-must-review-ca-disaster-funding-after-state-and-local-botched-response-to-wildfires>

⁵ Letter to Sec. Duffy (Sept. 26, 2025), <https://www.rickscott.senate.gov/2025/9/sen-rick-scott-in-letter-to-dot-we-must-review-ca-disaster-funding-after-state-and-local-botched-response-to-wildfires>

⁶ Supra notes 2-5.