

The background of the image is a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange and red, with a bright, glowing sun in the upper center. The city buildings are silhouetted against the sky, with some lights visible. A semi-transparent dark rectangle is overlaid on the image, containing the text.

# HEAT IS A FEMA DISASTER

CENTER *for*  
BIOLOGICAL  
DIVERSITY

# Extreme Heat is Deadly

*Heat Deaths Have Doubled in the U.S. in Recent Decades, Study Finds*

The finding comes as a significant part of the co

**More than 1.5 billion people have faced dangerous heat this year**

World map showing the extent of extreme heat waves

**Billions of people just felt the deadly intensity of climate-fueled heat waves**

Scorching heat across five continents set 1,400 records this week and showed how human-caused global warming has made catastrophic temperatures commonplace.

# Extreme Heat is a Utility Justice Issue

## Rising Bills

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- **8% increase** in summer utility bills
- **Average bill of \$709**

## Power Shutoffs

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- **500,000 shutoffs** this year
- **5.7 million shutoffs** 2020-2022

## Energy Poverty

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- **16% of households** are in energy poverty

# LIHEAP and Extreme Heat

- Only 7% of LIHEAP funding goes to cooling needs
- 4 deadliest states (TX, NV, WA, and CA) have received least amount of \$/person (\$91/person since 2001 vs VT at \$921/resident)



**FEMIA**

# The Stafford Act

A major disaster is statutorily defined as:

*“any natural catastrophe (including any hurricane, tornado, storm, high water, winddriven water, tidal wave, tsunami, earthquake, volcanic eruption, landslide, mudslide, snowstorm, or drought), or, regardless of cause, any fire, flood, or explosion, in any part of the United States, which in the determination of the President causes damage of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant major disaster assistance under this Act to supplement the efforts and available resources of States, local governments, and disaster relief organizations in alleviating the damage, loss, hardship, or suffering caused thereby.”*<sup>25</sup>

# Labor, Environmental, Public Health Groups Petition FEMA

To include extreme heat and wildfire as  
“major disasters” in the Stafford Act

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DIVERSITY



Alliance of Nurses for  
Healthy Environment



AZPHA  
Arizona Public Health Association



National  
Nurses  
United



LABOR NETWORK  
FOR SUSTAINABILITY



Friends of  
the Earth



Green Workers Alliance



The Farmworker  
Association of  
Florida, Inc.



FE Y JUSTICIA  
WORKER CENTER



GRID  
ALTERNATIVES



# Heat Resilience





<i>Funding Program</i>	<i>Type of Disaster Relief</i>		
	<b>Short-term Measures</b>	<b>Long-term Measures</b>	<b>Planning and Critical Services</b>
<b>Public Assistance</b>	Emergency water and cooling centers; N95 masks and respirators; evacuation; solar generators	Permanent cooling and safe air centers and shelter; on-site and distributed solar, energy storage, and microgrids; building weatherization; permeable or cool pavement; tree canopy	Mitigation planning tools; warning systems; funding for wrap-around services; payment for essential utilities to prevent electricity shutoffs
<b>Individual Assistance</b>	Air conditioning; air filtration systems; solar generators	Rooftop and community solar and storage; energy efficiency and weatherization technologies; energy-efficient appliances; and green roofs	Funding for essential services like medical, rental, and (limited) utilities assistance
<b>Hazard Mitigation Assistance</b>	Emergency water and cooling centers	Permanent cooling and safe air centers and shelter; on-site and distributed solar, energy storage, and microgrids; building weatherization; permeable or cool pavement; tree canopy	Mitigation planning tools; warning systems; benefit-cost analyses support

# Broad Support for FEMA Action

## FEMA Must Recognize Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke as Major Disasters

Published on August 29, 2024

TUCSON, AZ—As 55 million Americans face extreme heat this week, Tucson Mayor Raul Romero and 23 local government leaders from across the country [sent a letter](#) (PDF, 944KB) to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to recognize extreme heat and wildfire smoke as major disasters under the Stafford Act. Today's letter to FEMA and Department of Homeland Security officials is part of a broader effort to secure critical federal resources to protect communities from the escalating threats posed by these climate-driven catastrophes.

*"We are in survival mode," the letter says. "For communities like ours on the front lines of these emergencies, FEMA's support could not come soon enough."*

By declaring extreme heat and wildfire smoke as major disasters, FEMA could release funding to help cities address the growing health risks and infrastructure challenges posed by extreme heat and wildfire smoke. This change would unlock essential recovery and mitigation programs that could save lives—such as the development of community resilience hubs, cooling centers, and home weatherization programs for vulnerable populations, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities.

**Rep. Stansbury, Sen. Merkley Lead Letter To FEMA Urging Critical Policy Changes**

July 1, 2024 [Press Release](#)

### REPS. BLUMENAUER, GARCIA, AND NEGUSE CO-LEAD LETTER ON EXTREME HEAT, WILDFIRE SMOKE EFFECTS

WASHINGTON – Rep. Melanie Stansbury (NM-01) led a bicameral letter with Sen. Jeff Merkley (D-Oregon) urging the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to use all available resources to respond to the threats of extreme heat and wildfire smoke facing American communities.

Reps. Earl Blumenauer (OR-03), Sylvia Garcia (TX-29), and Joe Neguse (CO-02) joined as co-leads and 60 other members of Congress [signed the letter](#) .

"Extreme heat is a growing environmental justice issue," the lawmakers said. "Heat is the leading weather-related killer in the United States and wildfire seasons are starting earlier and ending later. As extreme heat and wildfire smoke continue to plague our communities, we urge FEMA to be more responsive to communities' evolving needs in the face of the climate crisis."



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July 16, 2024

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL AND EMAIL

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Re: **Attorneys General Support Recent Rulemaking Petition Addressing Extreme Heat and Wildfire Smoke**

Colorado, Connecticut, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming, Puerto Rico, Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. We request that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) make rulemaking to recognize that extreme heat and wildfire smoke events are eligible for Fire Management Assistance under the Stafford Act. Rulemaking would bolster subnational resilience to extreme heat and wildfire smoke events. The Attorneys General have filed this petition on the rulemaking docket.

**What has FEMA  
said?**

# Discussion

- What are you seeing in your states, cities when it comes to extreme heat?
- What are the major gaps in federal resources and programs?
- What would make for effective heat resilience policy?

A city skyline at sunset with a large sun in the sky. The sky is a deep orange-red, and the sun is a bright yellow circle in the upper center. The city buildings are silhouetted against the sky, with some lights visible. The word "THANKS" is written in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the middle of the image.

**THANKS**

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