

Remarks Prior to a Briefing on Federal Wildfire Response and Prevention Efforts
September 17, 2024

The President. Okay?

I'm about to receive a briefing on everything we're doing to support the people and communities threatened by these horrific wildfires. And they're devastating.

I—as I was saying to my staff before you came in, since I've been President, I've flown over more of these wildfires—from Arizona to Idaho and Montana and all that whole crescent—than makes up the entire State of Maryland burned to the ground.

And there's a lot that has to be—we're not going to be able to speak to all of it tonight, but—today, but we're going to talk a little bit about California and what's going on in Oregon as well.

Nationwide, nearly 37,000—37,000—wildfires burning over 7.3 million acres, more land than some of the States that we occupy. In California, they have three major wildfires destroying homes and displacing thousands of people—I mean, thousands of people. In Oregon, there's nearly 1.8 million acres burned. And it sounds like it's something good when you say it's a record, but it's a bad State record. It's real.

And my administration is working closely around the clock to control these fires and protect our people, but it's involving the matter of resources. And I look forward to this briefing from key members of my administration, who have been working like hell on this, and two frontline Governors.

And by the way, what I'd like to do is I'd like to make the—we've raised the pay to \$29 an hour. I want to make that permanent for the fire—these firefighters. Anyway.

So that's what we're going to be talking about, folks. And thank you for making the effort to come in. Appreciate it.

Q. Mr. President——

[At this point, several reporters began speaking at once.]

Q. President Biden, is—should people stop calling Trump a threat, with all these attempts?

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of the Interior Debra A. Haaland and Secretary of Agriculture Thomas J. Vilsack, who joined the President in the Oval Office; and Govs. Tina Kotek of Oregon and Gavin C. Newsom of California, who participated in the briefing via videoconference. A reporter referred to former President Donald J. Trump, in his capacity as the 2024 Republican Presidential nominee.

Categories: Addresses and Remarks : Federal wildfire response and prevention efforts, briefing.

Locations: Washington, DC.

Names: Haaland, Debra A.; Kotek, Tina; Newsom, Gavin C.; Vilsack, Thomas J.

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