

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-3205

January 16, 2025

The Honorable Jackie Bray
Commissioner
Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services
1220 Washington Avenue
State Office Campus
Building 7A, Suite 710
Albany, NY 12226

Dear Commissioner Bray,

I am writing today to inquire about the preparedness of New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services (DHSES) and its partners to combat potential wildfires in New York State. Climate change has exacerbated the unpredictability of weather conditions and natural disaster. New York has experienced several natural disasters in recent years, including wildfires, tornadoes, snowstorms, and flooding, and it is critical New York is prepared for the potential of unpredictable weather patterns that may lead to economic losses or loss of life.

With increased periods of drought in New York State, it is increasingly important that New York is prepared to handle naturally occurring or accidental wildfires. The Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services, as well as the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC), do an excellent job at training firefighters, providing technical assistance to communities, and managing New York's forests to prevent the spread of wildfires in our state.

In the wake of the devastation of the ongoing wildfires in California, I am profoundly saddened by the loss of life, homes, and communities. Also considering recent wildfires in New York, such as the Jennings Creek Fire, it is important that New York be proactive in its fire prevention programs through public education, forest management, and government preparedness. I am reaching out to request a briefing from your team on the following topics:

1. What are the preparedness plans for the DHSES and the Office of Fire Prevention and Control in the face of increasing fire threats?
2. How does DHSES coordinate with NYSDEC to consider climate change impacts on wildfire preparedness?
3. What support can the federal government provide to bolster the work of the Office of Fire Control and Prevention to ensure New York is prepared for potential fires?

I look forward to learning more about your plans and the support you provide New York State in the face of increasing wildfire threats. I stand ready to assist you in your vital prevention and

preparedness work, and I am committed to ensuring New Yorkers and all Americans are able to recover from these types of natural disasters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kirsten Gillibrand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator