

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 21, 2022

Assistant Secretary Rena Bitter  
Bureau of Consular Affairs  
U.S. Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Bitter,

We write in support of the request from the State of Colorado on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2022, to waive the replacement fees for passports destroyed and damaged in the Marshall Fire on December 30, 2021.

The Marshall Fire —accelerated by hurricane-force winds—destroyed more than 1,000 homes in Boulder County, Colorado. Devastating entire neighborhoods, the fire quickly became the most destructive in Colorado history, and the President authorized a Major Disaster Declaration on December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021 in response.

The Disaster Recovery Reform Act of 2018 authorizes the President, through the Department of State, to waive U.S. passport application fees for those whose passports were lost or destroyed in a major disaster. Due to the speed and intensity that this fire swept through residential areas, many individuals only had minutes to evacuate their homes and lost important documents in the fire, including their passports.

Replacing passports and critical documents are important steps in the recovery process as survivors seek to rebuild their lives. These documents are critical to accessing federal assistance, securing employment, and finding housing—all actions that are especially necessary in the wake of a disaster. Waiving the cost of passport replacement is a small step that will have a significant impact on our community's ability to recover.

We urge you to approve the request from the State of Colorado as soon as possible. We would also ask that you consider refunding the fees of Marshall Fire survivors who have already paid replacement fees for their passports.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue, and we look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,



Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



John Hickenlooper  
U.S. Senator



Michael F. Bennet  
U.S. Senator

cc: Nancy Casper, FEMA Federal Coordinating Officer