

Hermit's Peak Fire: Lawmakers introduce financial aid bill

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Business owners, residents to benefit

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., and Ben Ray Luján, D-N.M., and U.S. Representatives Teresa Leger Fernández, D-N.M., and Melanie Stansbury, D-N.M., introduced the Hermit's Peak Fire Assistance Act May 11 to provide additional compensation to New Mexico residents and business owners impacted by the Hermit's Peak Fire.

The Hermit's Peak Fire Assistance Act would require FEMA to design and administer a program for fully compensating those who suffered personal injury, property losses, business and financial losses resulting from the Hermit's Peak Fire.

The Hermit's Peak Fire, which later merged with the Calf Canyon Fire, started from an approved prescribed fire plan by U.S. Forest Service fire personnel on the Santa Fe National Forest. The combined fire has destroyed more than 200 homes, burned more than 200,000 acres of land, and resulted in evacuations of more than 25,000 individuals in San Miguel and Mora Counties.

Last week, Senators Heinrich and Luján, along with the entire New Mexico Congressional Delegation, called for the approval of a Major Disaster Declaration.

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Allowable damages under the act, include loss of property, and business and financial loss.