

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
Spokane Wildfires Press Conference
August 2, 2026

Sen. Cantwell Remarks

[\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Well, thank you, Governor. Spokane and the state of Washington has faced a historic weather event, and that historic weather event has caused probably one of the biggest damages that we've seen in the Spokane area in the history of our state.

But it also has been met with a historic response by our first responders, and I want to thank them, especially the [City of Spokane] Fire Chief Tom Williams, the [Spokane] Police Chief Kevin Hall, and [Spokane County] Sheriff Nowels. Thank you for the first responders and everything that you've done to respond to this fire.

The mayor called me last night [at] about 9:30 and said we need help, and she wanted to make sure that everybody was alerted at the federal level. The governor was already on it, and so I want to thank Governor Ferguson and Mayor Brown for their great leadership in responding so quickly to make sure that every resource would be available for the state of Washington.

[Major] General Welsh, it's great to be with you and all the work that you've done with the National Guard to be part of that first responders unit, and [great to be] with my colleague Congressman Baumgartner, who has created a partnership here to make sure that our voice is one and united when it comes to the additional federal resources that we need at this event.

We now know that there are thousands of Washingtonians in [the] Spokane area that had to be evacuated. We know there are hundreds of homes that have been destroyed. We know that we need continued help and support from everybody – from weather forecasters to people just helping families know what's going to happen next.

And so we just, [to] Washingtonians, say our greatest empathy to you and your families who've been displaced. There are some up here with us who have been evacuated. There are some that have lost their homes, so we are with you in this situation, and we are going to do everything we can to get the federal resources to help you.

I talked to the U.S. [Forest Service] Chief Schultz, who basically said this is the most [high] risk and resourced fire in the United States. Today, it is the top fire in our nation. That means they are going to give us the resources that we need here on the ground.

They are going to work with us in Washington and Oregon, and my sense is Idaho [as well] because of what's happening there, to make sure that our region is prioritized. So, Chief Schultz, we appreciate that, and you'll certainly be hearing from us on the list of things that we want to continue to see.

But I ask our fellow Washingtonians to help this region, to be as patient as you can, to listen to what the first responders are saying because we're not out of danger yet. The next couple of days will be

challenging, but we are going to do everything we can to make sure the resources are here and continue to make sure that this issue gets our nation's attention. Thank you.