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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Senator Diamond Calls on Governor, President to issue Major Disaster Declaration for Black Fire

SANTA FE – Today, **Senator Crystal Diamond** (District 35-Elephant Butte) wrote an open letter to Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham calling on her to urge President Joe Biden to issue a major disaster declaration for the Black Fire. The declaration would allow for the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to help with cleanup and aid to impacted areas and residents in Sierra, Catron, and Grant Counties.

“The Black Fire is now the second largest in New Mexico history and it will have generational impacts on our families in southwest New Mexico,” said Senator Diamond. “Our communities desperately need disaster relief now to prepare for the coming summer monsoons, and to rebuild from this historic fire. I urge the Governor and the President to provide us with the resources we need so the residents, farmers, ranchers, and producers in my district are not left out to dry.”

The full letter to Governor Lujan Grisham is attached below.

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New Mexico State Senate

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June 15, 2022

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor of New Mexico
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Suite 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Lujan Grisham:

I am writing to join my House of Representatives' colleagues in urging you to immediately request that President Joe Biden issue a major disaster declaration for the Black Fire.

According to this morning's daily update from the Southwest Area Incident Management Team, almost 318,000 acres have already been consumed, with a current containment of just 48 percent. As we approach the summer monsoon season, the threat of mass flooding is real and we cannot delay appropriate preventative action.

The Black Fire is impacting six major drainages in Sierra County, along with critical watersheds flowing into the Rio Grande Valley. Our residents, farmers, ranchers, and producers are already experiencing some of the effects, and absent additional assistance via federal resources, I fear much more destruction to our homes, irrigation systems, agricultural lands, and infrastructure is imminent.

In order to prevent additional and potentially catastrophic damages to our businesses and communities, I urge you to work with President Biden and our federal authorities to insure that we have the appropriate funding and resources needed to both combat and recover from this historic fire.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this pressing matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Crystal R. Diamond".

CRYSTAL DIAMOND
State Senator