

AMY KLOBUCHAR  
MINNESOTA

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RULES AND ADMINISTRATION

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 2, 2021

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

Thank you for your ongoing work to monitor and control the spread of summer wildfires that are severely impacting Minnesota's air quality, forest resources, and ability to continue to provide outdoor recreational opportunities. Like so many Minnesotans, I am especially concerned about recent reports of wildfire smoke from Canadian wildfires near the Winnipeg-Ontario border that have drifted south and created hazy and unhealthy air quality conditions throughout the state.

In order to communicate timely information about the impacts of wildfire smoke, I respectfully urge you to deploy Air Resource Advisors (ARAs) from the Interagency Wildland Fire Air Quality Response Program (IWFAQRP) to affected areas in Minnesota.

On Thursday, July 29, the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) reported the highest particulate air quality levels ever recorded in the state since reporting began in 2000. Furthermore, MPCA has indicated that unhealthy to very unhealthy conditions are expected to persist through next week and continue to threaten public health.

These unprecedented air quality conditions are an infrequent occurrence in Minnesota and many residents understandably have questions about the safety of outdoor activity, including for those with pre-existing conditions like asthma or heart conditions. Additionally, first responders, wildfire response teams, and other air quality officials are in need of real-time information about risks posed by fire smoke while they continue their critical work during this natural disaster.

The United States Forest Service operates the IWFAQRP to directly assess, communicate, and address the public health and safety risks associated with wildfire smoke to the general public, first responders, and firefighting personnel. While ARAs are currently deployed across several western states, the extraordinary air quality conditions in Minnesota require additional technical support.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you to deploy ARAs from the IWFAQRP to Minnesota to assist with analyzing and predicting smoke impacts during this ongoing air quality event. I look forward to working with you to address this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Amy Klobuchar". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" and last name "Klobuchar" clearly legible.

Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

CC: Randy Moore, Chief, United States Forest Service