

Trump says aid to Los Angeles fire victims will have political strings attached

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23 January 2025

In a television interview on Wednesday evening, President Donald Trump stated that aid to victims of the California wildfires should be withheld, going on to cite political reasons based on known lies and false information.

Speaking on Fox News with his supporter Sean Hannity, Trump said, “I don’t think we should give California anything until they let water flow down,” in a reference to bogus claims that Democratic Party Governor Gavin Newsom and other state officials blocked water flowing from the north of the state into the Los Angeles area.

Trump repeated the false claims that California’s fish conservation efforts in the northern part of the state are responsible for fire hydrants running dry in Los Angeles. As reported by the *Washington Post*, “Los Angeles does not get its water from Northern California systems Trump described, and water experts have repeatedly explained that the scale and severity of the Southern California fires was not caused by empty reservoirs or a lack of water flowing from Northern California.”

While the entire political establishment and ruling capitalist elite in southern California—which is dominated by the Democratic Party—are responsible for failing to prevent the wildfires that have destroyed entire communities over the past two weeks, the four-day-old Trump administration has used false information to absolve the Republican Party, fascist and far-right politicians from any responsibility in the catastrophe.

More than 12,000 structures, mostly homes, have been destroyed by the fires which erupted two weeks ago, fueled by extremely dry conditions and spread by high Santa Ana winds. The Palisades fire, which has burned over 23,000 acres, destroyed the Los Angeles

neighborhood of Pacific Palisades. It is now 75 percent contained after intense efforts by firefighters mobilized from across the US, Mexico and Canada. The Eaton fire is 95 percent contained after burning 14,000 acres and destroying much of the Altadena community.

New fires have erupted this week across Southern California. By Thursday afternoon, the Hughes Fire north of Los Angeles had burned more than 10,000 acres according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. While the new wildfire forced 31,000 residents to evacuate, with another 23,000 under evacuation warnings, Los Angeles County’s Coordinated Joint Information Center said 14,000 structures are threatened.

Fire department officials told CNN on Thursday afternoon that the Hughes Fire was 24 percent contained. Containment lines had been established by firefighters overnight, according to Los Angeles County Fire Department Captain Sheila Kelliher Berkoh. “They put a lot of work in and did an incredible job really knocking the heat out of this fire. And those winds definitely laid down a bit, which helped us get the upper hand on this fire,” Berkoh said.

President Trump made his threat to withhold aid on Fox News as he prepared for the first trip of his second term in office. He will visit the areas devastated by wildfires in Southern California on Friday after making a trip to North Carolina where the destruction of Hurricane Helene ravaged towns in the northwestern part of the state.

Withholding assistance to victims of the California wildfires for political reasons is a further attack on democratic government and devolution of the US into an authoritarian dictatorship, a process embraced openly by the second Trump administration. Previously, it had been standard practice for the federal

government to respond to such devastating events with emergency funding approved without any political strings attached.

During his Fox News interview Trump also called for the “reform” of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), saying it is “getting in the way of everything.” Although he did not elaborate on specifics of his plans, Trump said, “FEMA is going to be a whole big discussion very shortly, because I’d rather see the states take care of their own problems.”

Using tornadoes in Oklahoma as an example, Trump said, “I love Oklahoma, but you know what? If they get hit with a tornado or something, let Oklahoma fix it. ... And then the federal government can help them out with the money. FEMA is getting in the way of everything, and the Democrats actually use FEMA not to help North Carolina.”

While Trump has moved aggressively to implement his anti-democratic and anti-working class agenda, the Democratic Party had doubled down on its slavish accommodation to him.

On Wednesday, Gavin Newsom said he was willing to meet with the fascist president, scheduled to arrive in the Los Angeles area on Friday, even though Trump has regularly referred to the California governor as “Newscum.” When Trump was asked if he would meet with Newsom, he said, “I don’t know. I haven’t even thought about it yet.”

Newsom spokesman Bob Salladay said that as of Wednesday afternoon the governor’s office has yet to hear anything from the White House. The governor is scheduled to be in Southern California that day and hopes to meet with the president. “So far, we’ve not heard from the White House about Friday’s trip. We’ll be happy to meet with the president if it works,” Salladay said.

Last week, Newsom sent a letter to congressional Republicans requesting expedited disaster aid, “without conditions or prolonged negotiation.” However, following Trump’s lead, the Republican leadership has indicated that they will put conditions on any emergency funding.

On the day Trump was sworn into office, Newsom issued a statement calling for “common ground” with the new administration. “In the face of one of the worst natural disasters in America’s history, this moment underscores the critical need for partnership, a shared

commitment to facts, and mutual respect—values that enable civil discourse, effective governance, and meaningful action,” Newsom said.

All of these entreaties by Newsom have been thrown back in his face by Trump and the Republicans, while the citizens of southern California who have lost everything and have no place to live are left to suffer and wonder about their fate amidst one of the worst wildfire disasters in US history.



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