

OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR POLIS: APPEAL FEMA'S DISASTER ASSISTANCE DENIAL

September 23, 2026

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor of the State of Colorado
State Capitol Building
200 E. Colfax Ave., Room 136
Denver, CO 80203

Dear Governor Polis,

I am asking you to please listen to the people of Pueblo County and the surrounding communities who are still struggling to recover from the devastating Aspen Acres Fire.

More than 300 homes were destroyed. Those homes were more than buildings. They were where families raised their children, celebrated birthdays and holidays, kept photographs and treasured memories, and built their lives. When the fire destroyed those homes, it didn't just take away property. It disrupted people's entire lives.

I have personally spoken with people who lost their homes and are now living in their cars because they cannot afford temporary housing. Please stop and think about that for a moment. These are our neighbors—hardworking people who, through no fault of their own, suddenly find themselves without a home. They are trying to determine where they will sleep, how they will replace what they lost, how they will restore a normal routine for their children, how they will get to work, and how they will ever afford to rebuild. Now they have been told that FEMA has denied the requested Individual Assistance and Hazard Mitigation funding.

I believe we must appeal that decision. Individual Assistance is desperately needed to help displaced families with temporary housing, necessary home repairs, and other essential disaster-related expenses. Hazard Mitigation Assistance can help our communities rebuild more safely and reduce the risk of catastrophic losses in the future.

Our local communities have done what they can. Neighbors have helped neighbors. Volunteers, nonprofits, churches, businesses, and local governments have stepped up. But this disaster is too large for local resources alone. We need our state and federal government to step up, too.

I am asking you to use every available avenue to appeal FEMA's decision. I am also asking Colorado's congressional delegation to advocate for these families and FEMA to take another look at the extraordinary circumstances facing the people affected by this fire.

This is not about politics. This is about people: families who lost their homes, people sleeping in their vehicles because they have nowhere else to go, parents trying to give their children some

sense of normalcy after losing everything familiar, and people who worked their entire lives to build a home only to watch it disappear in a matter of hours. They should not have to face the road to recovery alone.

As a candidate for Pueblo County Clerk and Recorder, I believe public service means standing up for the people we serve—especially when they are at their most vulnerable.

Today, I am asking our leaders to stand with the families of the Aspen Acres Fire.

Please appeal FEMA's decision and seek reconsideration of the denial of Individual Assistance and Hazard Mitigation funding. Please give these families the help they need to find safe temporary housing, repair what can be repaired, rebuild what was lost, and begin putting their lives back together. They have already lost enough.

Mary Vieth /s/

Candidate for Pueblo County Clerk and Recorder

Pueblo County, Colorado