



Office of Governor Tim Walz &
Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan

October 9, 2026

Edward F. Fears, Director
Field Operations Center East
Office of Field Operations and Disaster Recovery
Office of Disaster Recovery and Resilience
U.S. Small Business Administration
101 Marietta Street NW, Suite 700
Atlanta, GA 30303-2725

Dear Mr. Fears,

Under provisions of Title 13 C.F.R. Part 123.3, I respectfully request the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) implement a Small Business Administrative declaration to provide assistance in the form of SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans for Cook and St. Louis counties following the wildfires on July 11, 2026 – August 11, 2026.

Beginning on July 11, 2026, the United States Forest Service closed 225,000 acres of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness ("BWCAW") because of multiple wildfires caused by lightning strikes. The Forest Service reported that 17 wildfires started in and around the BWCAW, which had resulted in evacuations and the closure of multiple trails and entry points. These fires impacted the northwest part of the BWCAW, Cook, Lake, and St. Louis Counties. Businesses had to cut short tours, cancel future reservations, and shut down operations and services to the BWCAW during their peak tourist season. Additionally, tourist traffic has not returned to the area since early July as a result of the fires and heavy smoke in the area.

A survey of these affected businesses was conducted to determine the economic impact of their losses for the disaster period as compared to the same period in the preceding year. Based upon these surveys, I certify at least five small businesses in the disaster area have suffered substantial economic injury as a result of the disaster and are in need of financial assistance not otherwise available on reasonable terms.

If you need additional information, please contact Allison Farole at (651)201-7404 or Allison.farole@state.mn.us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tim Walz".

Tim Walz
Governor

Enclosures
Estimated Disaster Economic Injury Worksheet for Businesses - 11