

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

August 17, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

In response to a severe storm, straight-line winds, and flooding that occurred across the Commonwealth on July 9, 2023, Governor Josh Shapiro submitted a request for a major disaster declaration for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The declaration requested Individual Assistance and Public Assistance for Berks County and Hazard Mitigation for the entire Commonwealth. We write now in support of this request as well as in support of extending Individual Assistance and Public Assistance to include Bucks County and Northampton County following storms in late July, should it be determined that similar assistance is needed in those counties.

In the days since the severe storms tore across Pennsylvania, PEMA, FEMA, and local emergency management representatives in all impacted areas have worked together to protect Pennsylvanians and facilitate recovery. Under the Stafford Act, only the President has the authority to approve a request from a governor for a major disaster declaration, an action which unlocks targeted federal resources to support recovery efforts. These additional resources are designed to accelerate recovery and ensure that communities can move forward. Providing these resources in the wake of the Berks County incident and potentially also for Bucks and Northampton Counties would ensure that the federal government shows up for Pennsylvanians.

We have heard from constituents and emergency management professionals in these counties about the life-altering damage that occurred as a result of flooding. For example, in Northampton County, the municipal storm system of Bangor was overwhelmed by the intense storm, leading to severe damage to homes and property. In Berks County, flash flooding washed away a large section of the bank of Antietam Creek along with the foundation of a nearby building. The deadly flash flooding in Bucks County, Upper Makefield Township has devastated this community as they continue to mourn the loss of seven victims and attempt to recover from the severe damage to homes and roadways. These Pennsylvania communities would benefit from federal assistance, and it is critical that Pennsylvania families and communities know that the federal government stands with them.

We urge you to approve Governor Shapiro's current major disaster declaration request, as well as any that may follow for Bucks and Northampton Counties, as soon as possible. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



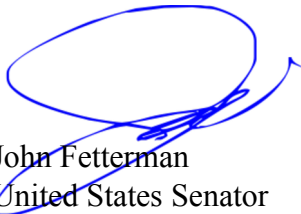
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



Susan Wild
Member of Congress



John Fetterman
United States Senator



Daniel Meuser
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress