

CEDRIC L. RICHMOND
2ND DISTRICT, LOUISIANA

COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
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THE INTERNET

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1802

March 14, 2016

240 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-6636

DISTRICT OFFICES:
2021 LAKESHORE DRIVE
SUITE 309
NEW ORLEANS, LA 70122
(504) 288-3777

200 DERBIGNY STREET
SUITE 3200
GRETN, LA 70053
(504) 365-0390

1520 THOMAS H. DELPIT DRIVE
SUITE 126
BATON ROUGE, LA 70802
(225) 636-5600

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Obama and Administrator Fugate:

This year, the state of Louisiana has faced repeated rounds of deadly storms and severe flooding. First, the Mississippi River flooded, prompting an emergency declaration and the Governor to request a major disaster declaration. Three weeks ago, a series of storms caused severe flood damage and deadly tornadoes in parishes across the state. And over the past several days, we have experienced severe flooding that has devastated communities. While this series of disasters has been challenging, the State of Louisiana has risen to meet that challenge every time and, when help has been requested, the federal government has been a good partner in these tough times. It is my hope that the cooperation and assistance that was on display, with the rapid request for and granting of a disaster declaration, will remain in place as people continue to recover and rebuild from the storms that occurred in late February.

A Major Disaster Declaration by the President is an important step for local governments and individuals affected by a disaster to receive resources and assistance as they rebuild and recover. It qualifies people and local government for assistance that truly helps in difficult times. The Public Assistance that the state and local governments become eligible for allows debris to be removed, and public facilities to be repaired or replaced when costs overwhelm state and local budgets. The Individual Assistance that citizens become eligible for can provide support for temporary housing and assistance with the process of rebuilding or repairing their homes and their lives. This assistance is so important because it comes after devastation, when it is needed most.

The storms on February 22 - 23, 2016, destroyed lives, homes, and communities across the state. These storms were especially destructive because they included the most tornadic activity in Louisiana history. The tornados that touched down in Assumption, Iberville, St. James, St. John, and St. Mary parishes were deadly and recovering from the damage they caused will be a long and difficult process. In St. James Parish, a tornado touched down in an RV park home to 160 trailers, taking two lives. In St. John the Baptist Parish, over 500 properties sustained damage. The people of St. James and St. John, along with the people of Assumption, Iberville, and St. Mary parishes are dealing with recovery

from these unprecedented storms. We should be working together to make sure they get the assistance they deserve.

Over the past several weeks, we have seen great cooperation between the state and FEMA in the immediate aftermath of February's storms. It is my hope that the cooperation will continue and a request for a disaster declaration for the storms and tornados will be submitted as soon as possible, and that federal assistance will follow soon after. While the weather has been challenging, I know that the people of Louisiana are up to that challenge. If all aspects of government continue to work together, Louisiana citizens will get the support they deserve.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'C. Richmond', with a large, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress

Cc: Administrator Craig Fugate, Federal Emergency Management Agency