

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

February 11, 2020

Pete Gaynor
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20024

Dear Mr. Gaynor:

We write to express concerns that we have heard from Minnesota officials and constituents about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) significant underestimation in accounting for the damages and cost of recovery in the preliminary assessment for severe weather and widespread flooding in the spring of 2019 (FEMA-4442-DR). We also ask that FEMA provide additional financial assistance to the state and undertake a full review of the procedures that it relied on in developing its estimate of the damages in Minnesota so that similar situations can be prevented in the future.

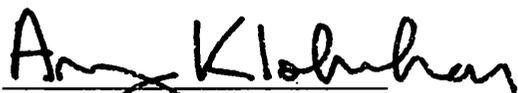
After severe weather and widespread flooding in the spring of 2019 contributed to infrastructure damage in 51 counties and 4 tribal governments across the state, Minnesota Governor Tim Walz requested federal assistance to aid in the recovery. At that time, we wrote to the President in support of issuing a disaster declaration in a timely manner.

We have heard concerns that FEMA finalized the preliminary damage assessment before our communities could accurately inventory the damage caused to their infrastructure. Since that time, the actual cost of recovery has increased from FEMA's \$40 million estimate to \$76 million. The State of Minnesota has already allocated nearly \$10 million from the State Disaster Assistance Contingency Account to fund its 25 percent share and now needs to cover an additional \$9 million of unanticipated recovery costs. This underestimation of damages by nearly half the total cost has contributed to a deficiency in the State Disaster Assistance Contingency Account and uncertainty surrounding the state's ability to provide emergency funding for future severe weather events prior to the 2020 state legislative session.

Minnesotans are resilient and have demonstrated their ability to come together to respond to and recover from weather disasters through the partnership of the federal government. It is for this reason that we ask FEMA to provide additional financial assistance to the state and undertake a full review of the procedures that it relied on in developing its estimate of the damages in Minnesota so that similar situations can be prevented in the future.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate



Tina Smith
United States Senate



Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress



Jim Hagedorn
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress

CC: Mr. James Joseph, Regional Administrator, FEMA Region V