

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 29, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to you in strong support of the state of Minnesota's requests for Major Disaster Declarations under the Stafford Act to assist communities that are working to recover from severe weather this spring, including thunderstorms, tornadoes, high winds, and flooding. These natural disaster events have caused significant damage in our state, and we ask that you quickly grant approval for federal government disaster assistance.

The weather this spring was colder than average, and late snowstorms have combined with above-normal precipitation to cause high water and flooding throughout central, western, and northern Minnesota. Beginning on April 22, 2022, a spring storm system with very heavy rains and strong winds caused flash flooding in northwestern Minnesota. The worst of the conditions is in the Red River Valley and the Rainy River Basin. Year-to-date precipitation at the border in International Falls has been more than double the 20-year average and is more than 20 percent higher than the next closest year of 2013.

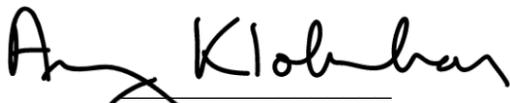
On May 9, May 11, and May 12, 2022, three severe and destructive storm systems crossed our state from southwest to northeast. The last of these storms produced sustained winds of 60 miles per hour with gusts reaching up to 94 mph—the highest recorded in the state since 2014. These winds caused widespread damage to farm buildings including barns, grain bins, silos, and fences; public buildings including fire halls, hospitals, and community centers; utility and highway infrastructure including rural electric cooperative power lines, telephone poles, and county roads; and several hundred households. The damage to farm buildings alone was extensive enough that our Farm Service Agency (FSA) State Executive Director has requested Department of Agriculture (USDA) disaster assistance through an Administrator's Physical Loss Notice (APLN).

Joint federal and state emergency management teams have conducted preliminary damage assessments and have determined that the losses meet the threshold for federal assistance under the Stafford Act through a Major Disaster Declaration. Governor Walz has submitted two official requests for disaster assistance; one regarding the flooding that began on April 22 and is still in effect in some areas, and a second letter regarding wind/storm damage for the period of May 8-13. These two requests cover 38 counties and 4 tribal nations. The letters were dated June 22 and June 23.

The resiliency of Minnesotans during times of natural disaster has been shown time and time again. When flood waters rise and homes are damaged, volunteers and neighbors are quick to fill sandbags, clean up debris, and lend a hand to those in need. Impacted communities will repair the damage and rebuild following these disasters, but timely federal assistance will speed up the recovery effort.

We strongly support the state of Minnesota's requests for a Major Disaster Declaration under the Stafford Act and ask that you grant its approval to assist communities that are working to recover from severe weather this spring.

Sincerely,



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Tom Emmer
Member of Congress



Michelle Fischbach
Member of Congress



Pete Stauber
Member of Congress