

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 1, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge swift approval of Governor Bill Lee's request for a major disaster declaration pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act due to severe weather beginning on September 26, 2024.

The remnants of Hurricane Helene have caused widespread damage across Tennessee, especially in East Tennessee. The unprecedented amount of rainfall in the region had devastating consequences, with some areas receiving up to *12 inches* of rainfall. Multiple rivers in the state neared or exceeded historical flood stage records, and multiple dams overtopped or were under imminent threat of failure. Catastrophic flash flooding has devastated communities across East Tennessee, causing I-40 to collapse and leaving homes destroyed, businesses underwater, and widespread power outages. In fact, many areas are expected to be without power for weeks. As of September 30, approximately 20 water treatment facilities reported disruptions, impacting over 160,000 Tennesseans. 77 school districts experienced disruptions due to the extreme weather event. Sadly, the Tennessee Department of Health attributed the flooding to the deaths of six Tennesseans, and the search continues for over 100 individuals in impacted counties. We are grateful to the heroic actions of first responders on the local, state, and federal level for their work up to this point.

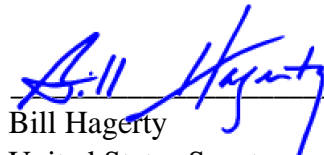
To respond to this disaster, Governor Lee is specifically requesting Individual Assistance for Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington Counties. He is also requesting Public Assistance, including direct Federal assistance, for Carter, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington Counties, and Hazard Mitigation statewide. The Governor further requests 100 percent federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective services—Categories A and B—under the Public Assistance program for the first 45 days of the incident, beginning on September 26, 2024. On behalf of the State of Tennessee, we urge you to approve this request as soon as possible.

Our offices can provide you with any additional information you need.

Sincerely,



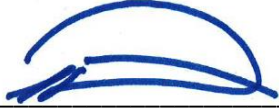
Marsha Blackburn  
United States Senator



Bill Hagerty  
United States Senator



Tim Burchett  
Member of Congress



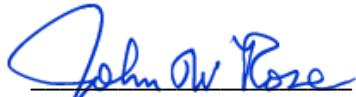
Scott DesJarlais, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Mark Green, M.D.  
Member of Congress



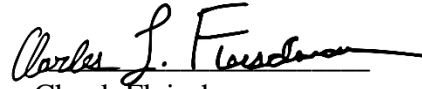
David Kustoff  
Member of Congress



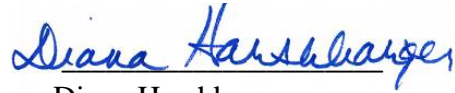
John Rose  
Member of Congress




Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Chuck Fleischmann  
Member of Congress



Diana Harshbarger  
Member of Congress



Andy Ogles  
Member of Congress