

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 24, 2021

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

Dear Mr. President:

We write in support of Governor Jay Inslee's March 12, 2021 request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Washington as a result of damages incurred by a severe winter storm, straight-line winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides beginning December 29, 2020, through January 16, 2021. We also support the request for statewide assistance from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Public Assistance Categories A-G for Clallam, Columbia, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Okanogan, Pacific, Pend Oreille, Skagit, Skamania, Snohomish, Spokane, and Wahkiakum County.

From the period of December 29, 2020, through January 16, 2021, Washington State experienced a continual series of severe winter storms in rapid succession as a result of a strong and persistent Aleutian Low pressure system in the eastern Pacific. The severe winter storm system produced high winds and significant precipitation, resulting in the flooding of 15 rivers, landslides, and mudslides, coastal and inland flooding, road closures, and widespread power outages for more than 500,000 metered customers. High winds created damaging coastal surf and knocked down numerous trees across the state, resulting in two fatalities, multiple injuries, and search and rescue operations taking place. Joint FEMA-State Public Assistance Preliminary Damage Assessment teams validated that damage incurred by Washington state due to the severe winter storm totaled \$21,342,176, with \$17,444,959 in damages attributed to sixteen counties that met their impact indicator.

The impacts from the severe winter storms, high winds, flooding, landslides, and mudslides must be taken in the larger context of the dozens of declared and undeclared disasters that have occurred in the state in recent history. Washington State has experienced numerous devastating disasters over the past two years, resulting in four major disaster declarations. These disasters have stretched our state's emergency management and recovery resources thin and have further devastated communities impacted by a historically destructive wildfire season and the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Consequently, we fully support Governor Inslee's request for a major disaster declaration for the December-January winter storms that includes Public Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program as soon as possible.

Thank you in advance for your prompt attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



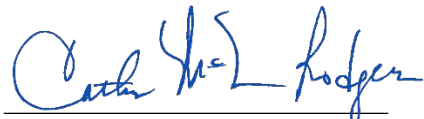
Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



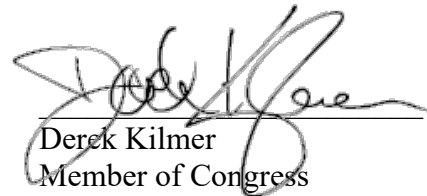
Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



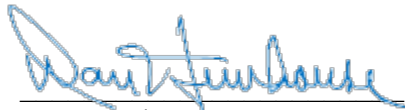
Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress



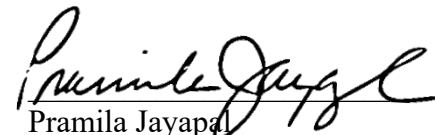
Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



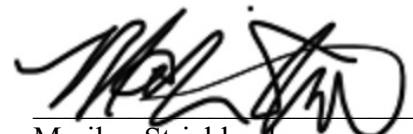
Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress