

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 1, 2024

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

Dear Mr. President:

As members of the Washington state delegation, we write in support of Governor Jay Inslee's March 22, 2024 request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the state of Washington as a result of damages incurred by a series of severe winter storms at the beginning of this year. We urge you to approve the request for assistance as quickly as possible.

Over a 25-day period in January 2024, a series of extraordinary storm events struck Washington state in rapid succession, resulting in prolonged hazardous conditions across the state. Intense windstorms, at times exceeding 60 miles per hour, downed trees and powerlines and exacerbated high tides along coastal communities, already stressed by intense precipitation, to the point of flooding. Widespread blizzard conditions—ice, winds, extreme temperatures, and heavy precipitation—caused significant disruption and resulted in higher than normal snowpack. These conditions continued for weeks, plummeting temperatures to record lows throughout the state and continuing to damage critical infrastructure. Ice buildup and unceasing wind caused additional power outages and major roadways were closed several times due to the continuing hazardous conditions. Even as temperatures began to rise to warmer levels, communities saw excessive runoff from increased precipitation as well as an atmospheric river event. The heavy rain spurred rapid snowmelt and oversaturated soil resulting in flooding, mudslides and landslides.

The damage caused by these successive storms has been extensive and overwhelming, leaving vital public infrastructure in both urban and rural communities throughout our state in need of significant repairs. Downed public utilities caused over 100,000 Washingtonians to go without power, some for several days. Many communities saw significant damage to public infrastructure necessary for local economies, such as boat launches, railroad tracks and popular tourism attractions such as state parks. Several counties sustained widespread damage to office spaces, schools, wastewater treatment and other public facilities.

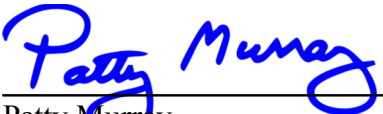
Notably, these storms are the latest in a series of significant disasters Washington state has experienced over the last several years. Since 2018, the state has had to grapple with eleven major disaster declarations—all in addition to being one of the earliest states hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. While Washington state's first responders have reacted to these disasters promptly

and heroically, the events triggered by these intense winter storms are quickly exhausting the already-strained capacity and resources of our local communities and state agencies.

Consequently, we fully support Governor Inslee's request for a Major Disaster Declaration for these severe winter storms, including Public Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

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


Sincerely,




Patty Murray
United States Senator




Rick Larsen
Member of Congress




Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress




Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress




Adam Smith
Member of Congress



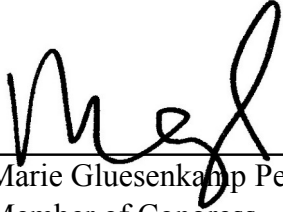
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress



Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator