

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 28, 2024

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

Dear President Biden,

We respectfully request that you take immediate action on the recent request for a major disaster declaration from the State of New Mexico in response to the unprecedented flooding that occurred in Chaves County starting on October 19, 2024. The State is requesting Public Assistance, Categories A through G, including Direct Federal Assistance, and Individual Assistance for Chaves County. The State is requesting all parts of Individual Assistance, including Mass Care/Emergency Assistance, Individuals and Households Program, Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Legal Services, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Serious Needs Assistance, Transitional Sheltering Assistance, and Displacement Assistance. The State is also requesting Hazard Mitigation statewide, as facilitated through the state of New Mexico's Natural Disaster Hazard Mitigation Plan, which has been approved by FEMA through September 12, 2027. We ask that you expeditiously grant the major disaster declaration and make this federal assistance available as soon as possible for the State and Chaves County to have all the resources they need to recover from the devastation of this flooding.

From October 18 to 21, 2024, a slow-moving low-pressure system became stationary over Chaves County and struck the area with 5.79 inches of rain – half a year's worth of precipitation in just one event – devastating the city of Roswell and multiple downstream communities with severe flash flooding. The rapid onset of severe weather gave residents only minutes to evacuate their homes, and more than 300 people required rescue from the floods by active responders, including the New Mexico National Guard, which activated the night of October 19, 2024.

This flooding has caused extensive damage to public infrastructure, homes, and businesses throughout Chaves County. The joint FEMA and State initial damage assessment has calculated that as many as 723 homes and 200 businesses have could have been damaged as a result of the flooding. Additionally, the flooding caused dozens of vehicles to wash out into bridges, crippled local governments' response capacity due to the loss of multiple vehicles and IT equipment, and the flood water itself filled more than thirty-two public buildings. The current assessed damage from these public facility impacts is \$51.9 million.

Due to the life and death nature of this crisis, we urge you to act without delay and approve the State of New Mexico's request for a major disaster declaration. It is imperative that the federal government provides full support to New Mexican communities to respond and recover from the devastation caused by this flooding. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



MARTIN HEINRICH
United States Senator



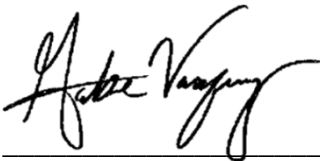
BEN RAY LUJÁN
United States Senator



MELANIE STANSBURY
United States Representative



TERESA LEGER FERNANDEZ
United States Representative



GABE VASQUEZ
United States Representative