

Washington, DC - Vermont's Congressional Delegation wrote to President Bush today, requesting a Presidential Disaster Declaration for damage caused by a severe rain and wind storm last month and through this month.

The declaration would make Vermont eligible for Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance.

"FEMA resources are critical to help Vermont and its towns respond to this disaster... We urgently request your support of a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the state of Vermont..." Sen. Patrick Leahy (D), Sen. Bernie Sanders (I), and Rep. Peter Welch (D) wrote.

The text of the Delegation's letter to President Bush is below:

August 6, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush,

We are writing to call your attention to the request by the State of Vermont for disaster assistance in the wake of unprecedented and ongoing rain and storm damage from an event beginning on July 18th.

Severe thunderstorms with high wind and heavy rainfall have persisted over a three week period of time across the state. The ground over the northern and central parts of the state is

completely saturated and unable to absorb these record amounts of rain, with continued forecasts for significant additional rain this week. Rivers have flooded their banks and remain precariously high. An EF-1 tornado was confirmed by the National Weather Service during this time period.

The impact of these events has been particularly hard on Vermont towns. Many of our towns are dealing with road washouts, downed trees that restrict emergency access and power outages. Most severely impacted are state and town roads that have been blocked by debris and water from these extreme weather events. Every county has suffered the impact of flooding and wind damage, with particularly high damage in the counties of Caledonia, Grand Isle, and Lamoille.

FEMA resources are critical to help Vermont and its towns respond to this disaster. According to preliminary estimates, the amount of damage caused by this storm system exceeds the threshold for Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act eligibility. We expect the additional county of Washington and or others to be included in the preliminary damage assessment as this event is open-ended.

We urgently request your support of a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the state of Vermont for the July 18th storm event. Thank you.

Sincerely,

PATRICK LEAHY  
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS  
United States Senator

PETER WELCH  
United States Representative