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Vermont's congressional delegation announced Friday that the federal government had given Vermont a waiver that will allow it to use \$4.5 million out of \$21.6 million federal disaster relief funds for Tropical Storm Irene victims in Windham County.

The delegation obtained the waiver because federal regulations restricted 80 percent of the \$21.6 million to what the Federal Emergency Management Agency said were the two hardest-hit counties in Vermont: Windsor and Washington counties.

Windham County sustained serious and in some cases devastating damages, particularly the communities of Wilmington and Brattleboro, after Irene.

In a joint statement, Sens. Patrick Leahy and Bernard Sanders and Rep. Peter Welch said, "This waiver provides crucial flexibility to the state and will help the cities and towns of Windham County continue on the road to recovery. So many resilient Vermonters are still working to rebuild their lives in the wake of Irene. These investments will support the residents of Windham County as they recover and move forward."