

*Vermont's congressional delegation – Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) and Rep. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) – issued the following statement Thursday after President Barack Obama declared Vermont a disaster area and cleared the way for federal assistance in the recovery from Tropical Storm Irene:*

"We appreciate the president's quick and decisive action to help Vermonters deal with one of the worst natural disasters in the state's history. Federal and state agencies have worked side by side with local governments, volunteer first responders and the Vermont National Guard to deal with the storm and the raging flood waters. We will continue to cooperate as Vermont recovers and rebuilds.

"The initial disaster declaration covers public buildings and structures in 13 counties and offers assistance to individuals and businesses in four counties. We expect the president will provide additional assistance in some of the most hard-hit areas of Vermont as additional information becomes available."