

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 13, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to express support for Governor Tony Evers' request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Kenosha, Racine, and Milwaukee Counties following the severe storms and consequential lakeshore flooding and damage that occurred in these counties in early January 2020.¹ We applaud the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) swift and thorough response to the request from Wisconsin officials to jointly conduct a Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA). We hope the agency will work with the same urgency to review the Governor's disaster declaration request for federal Public Assistance (PA) and statewide Hazard Mitigation.

As you are aware, beginning on January 10, and continuing through January 12, 2020, high winds, combined with near-record high water levels in Lake Michigan, resulted in significant flooding and extensive damage in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties.² As of Monday, January 27, 2020, these counties reported a preliminary combined assessment of \$30 million dollars in damage to public infrastructure. On January 31, 2020, Governor Tony Evers signed Executive Order #68 declaring a State of Emergency for the affected counties.³

The affected infrastructure includes the international piers and docks at Port Milwaukee, which sustained significant damage and is of vital importance to the local and regional economy. The Port promotes shipping and commerce throughout the region by providing access to domestic and international ships, rail, and over-the-road transportation. Additionally, the high waves (reaching 6 to 8 feet) and gusting winds (of up to 50 mph) washed ashore substantial amounts of debris that damaged onshore infrastructure, such as storm sewers in Kenosha and parks and beaches throughout Racine County. This damage, combined with extensive shoreline erosion, will require significant public funds to clean up.

On February 7, FEMA and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) completed the PDA and assessed at least \$10,036,467 in damages stemming from the event. It is anticipated that additional federally reimbursable damages may be discovered as these communities continue recovery efforts.

¹ Office of Governor Tony Evers, "Gov. Evers Asks for Federal Disaster Assistance in Southeastern Wisconsin," February 11, 2020, <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/27b36a8>

² AP, "High winds, flooding cause major damage at Port Milwaukee," January 12, 2020, <https://apnews.com/3cce49d7ec47377e331ecaa6aedf4c13>

³ Office of Governor Tony Evers, Relating to a Proclamation Declaring a State of Emergency in Response to Damaging Winds and Lakeshore Flooding, January 31, 2020, https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/executive_orders/2011_scott_walker/2012-68.pdf

As the Governor stated in his letter, in the past two years, Wisconsin has been subjected to high number of extreme weather events that have placed an inordinate burden on state resources. Last summer, the state received a disaster declaration, DR-4459, which included PA for 18 counties and 2 tribes throughout Wisconsin; however, current eligible damage requests for the Wisconsin Disaster Fund still total close to \$3.1 million, without including the damages from this most recent event.

While the state has committed to helping those in need with all resources available at the state level, without federal assistance, our communities will face immense difficulty recovering fully. The personal losses not eligible for federal assistance have already caused great hardship for so many of our citizens, but they pale in comparison to the greater regional economic losses that await if the public infrastructure we depend upon is not repaired expeditiously.

It is our hope that this request will be reviewed and considered promptly, and that FEMA will continue to work actively with the state and necessary local governments to facilitate the recovery and rebuilding necessary.

Sincerely,



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



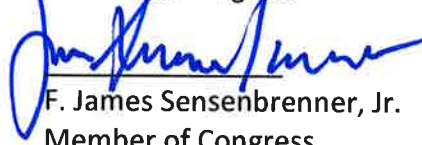
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Bryan Steil
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Mike Gallagher
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

CC: Peter T. Gaynor, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency