

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 30, 2011

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to request that you immediately grant a Major Disaster Declaration for New Jersey in response to Hurricane Irene, which hit the state beginning on August 27, 2011. In addition, following such a declaration, we request that you expedite the distribution of federal recovery aid to our state. The storm caused record flooding and massive devastation throughout New Jersey, and our residents, businesses and the state and local communities need immediate federal support to help rebuild from the disaster.

Flood levels reached record highs throughout the state and strong winds and severe rain led to widespread power outages and flooding. Entire towns have been engulfed by flood waters, roads are closed, and lives have been lost. Rainfall totals during the hurricane reached high levels, which on top of an already saturated ground caused by recent storms, created extensive flooding and new damage. Nearly all of the rivers across our state have reached historic river crests.

Homes, businesses and personal property have received significant damage. The destruction will lead to severe hardship and the costs will be so great that many residents will not be able to rebuild their lives on their own. In addition, Hurricane Irene caused extensive damage to public infrastructure such as roads, bridges, public parks and government facilities, and local governments will face enormous challenges as they try to rebuild.

Given the severe nature of the hurricane and the extent of the damage, we ask that you immediately grant a Major Disaster Declaration for New Jersey and expedite federal recovery and rebuilding aid. Thank you in advance for your consideration of this request and we look forward to your prompt action in addressing this important issue.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG


ROBERT MENENDEZ