

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 29, 2011

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo,

We write to thank you for your efforts in support of the counties across New York State impacted by the recent severe storms and flooding as well as to request your continued assistance. As you know, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared yesterday that the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Clinton, Delaware, Essex, Steuben, Warren, and Wyoming are not eligible for federal assistance for damage suffered as a result of the severe storms and flooding during the period of May 9-30, 2011. The stated reason for the denial was that “the damage from this event was not of such severity and magnitude as to be beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments.”

We could not disagree more. As the Representatives for the counties impacted, we know firsthand the significant infrastructure damage that occurred, including extensive damage to homes, businesses, vital bridges and roads, and disruption of daily life. Additionally, the effects of these subsequent storms were compounded by the damage already done during the storms from April 26 to May 8, 2011, for which a disaster declaration has been issued. While our local governments, with assistance from the state, are taking the first steps towards recovery, we strongly believe that federal assistance is necessary and appropriate.

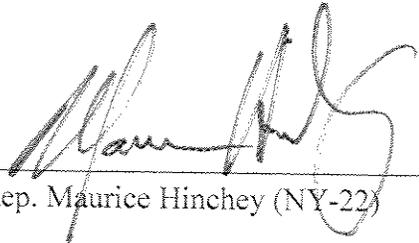
Thus, we respectfully ask that you appeal FEMA’s denial of public assistance expeditiously. Additionally, we would also like to offer our help in working with localities to gather the supporting evidence necessary to accompany the appeal. Our constituents need help now, and they have a reasonable expectation – that we also share – that the federal government will take an active and substantial role in helping rebuild and repair needed infrastructure that was damaged or destroyed by these acts of nature.

Thank you for your continued efforts on behalf of our constituents and all New Yorkers impacted by this spring's devastating storms. We look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure our local communities recover swiftly.

Sincerely,



Rep. Chris Gibson (NY-20)



Rep. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22)



Rep. Kathy Hochul (NY-26)



Rep. Bill Owens (NY-23)



Rep. Tom Reed (NY-29)