Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 24, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Administrator W. Craig Fugate
Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear President Obama and Administrator Fugate:

Thank you for your efforts in support of the counties across New York State impacted by the recent severe storms and flooding. In July, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) declared that the counties of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chemung, Clinton, Delaware, Essex, Steuben, Warren, and Wyoming were 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."

On October 19, 2011, the State of New York submitted a formal appeal of this denial and added Chautauqua and Niagara Counties to the State's original request. We write today to express our strong support for this appeal. New York State has suffered tremendous devastation throughout 2011 and, without federal assistance, our local communities will not have the resources to repair the extensive damage done to vital bridges and roads. As you know, 44 CFR Section 206.48 requires FEMA to take localized impact and recent multiple disasters into account when evaluating a state's request for a major disaster declaration. Given that prior to the May 9-30 storms, New York had received four major disaster declarations and local damages in some affected counties exceed per capita thresholds by a factor of almost 60, we respectfully urge you to accept New York's appeal for assistance.

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

Sincerely,

Sen. Chuck Schumer (NY)

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (NY)

Rep. Chris Gibson (NY-20)

Rep. Maurice Hinchey (NY-22)

Rep. Tom Reed (NY-29)

Rep. Louise Slaughter (NY-28)

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Rep. Brian Higgins (NY-27)

Rep. Kathy Hochul (NY-26)

Rep. Bill Owens (NY-23)