

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 5, 2015

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

Dear President Obama:

In the wake of devastating weather events across the Southeastern United States on December 23, 2014, we are writing to request your full consideration of Mississippi's request for a major federal disaster declaration for Jones and Marion Counties as well as for hazard mitigation assistance statewide.

We understand that the State of Mississippi and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) jointly continue to assess the damage across the state. Should the state request federal disaster declarations for other counties, we are hopeful you will also give these requests your full consideration.

We have been encouraged by the efforts of FEMA's to deploy rapidly to Mississippi to assist state and local officials in estimating the severity of the initial damage caused by a series of at least five tornado touchdowns across our state, one rated as devastating as EF-3. The latest estimates show that five Mississippi lives have been lost and the storms had a major impact on the local economy with at least 43 businesses and over 200 residences assessed as damaged or destroyed. The affected counties also have poverty levels considerably higher than the national average.

We know from our ongoing recovery in Mississippi from the effects of Hurricanes Katrina and Isaac as well as destructive tornados in Smithville in 2011, Hattiesburg area in 2013 and throughout our state in 2014 that significant resources and cooperation are necessary to recover fully from natural disasters as quickly as possible. We stand ready to face this new challenge by supporting the local communities, the State, and your administration as we work together to rebuild and renew areas destroyed by this major storm.

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Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need further assistance in this effort.

Sincerely,



THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator



ROGER WICKER
United States Senator



BENNIE THOMPSON
Member of Congress



GREGG HARPER
Member of Congress



ALAN NUNNELEE
Member of Congress



STEVEN PALAZZO
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Jeh Johnson, Secretary, Department of Homeland Security

The Honorable Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency