

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 9, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write in full support of Maine Governor Janet Mills' request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Cumberland, Franklin, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, and York counties as a result of damages caused by Winter Storm Elliott between December 23 and December 24, 2022.

As demonstrated in the Governor's letter to you last month, it is clear these seven counties experienced extreme flooding between December 23 and December 24, 2022 that have exceeded the State's recovery capacity. A rapidly developing low-pressure system developed and moved across New England, hitting Maine coastal communities with wind gusts exceeding 70 miles per hour and a 2.5 foot storm surge that damaged infrastructure, including historical sites, during a devastating high tide. Excessive rain resulted in one to three feet of water inundation in many coastal communities, making many roads in the area inaccessible for a period of time.

In southern and western portions of the state, heavy rainfall coupled with snowmelt and frozen ground cover significantly exacerbated flood damage, resulting in power outages to over 330,000 customers and necessitating the response by 906 line workers and 230 tree crews. The Maine Disaster Recovery Team was immediately activated to support damage data collection across eight counties and ultimately found public infrastructure damages exceeded the State's capabilities.

In early January, Maine formally requested a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Public Assistance. On-site assessments were conducted across Cumberland, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, and York counties between January 9 and 13 with virtual assessments taking place across Franklin and Kennebec counties between January 17 and 18. The statewide PDA validated \$3,280,380 in public infrastructure damages, which is expected to increase as the Maine and federal emergency management agencies work to complete validation damages.

The State has also verified that all damaged infrastructure is not eligible for commercial insurance coverage, placing all repair costs on local government taxpayers if federal assistance is

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not secured. Since the Governor's letter for a Major Disaster Declaration, an additional two out of the seven counties covered in this request have met their per capita thresholds, bringing the total number of counties having met their thresholds up to six.

We urge you to expeditiously approve the Governor's request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Cumberland, Franklin, Knox, Oxford, Somerset, Waldo, and York counties. The people of Maine are in great need of this federal assistance and we thank you for your support.

Sincerely,



Susan M. Collins
United States Senator



Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Jared F. Golden
Member of Congress