

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 24, 2024

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Susan Collins
Vice Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Leader Schumer, Minority Leader McConnell, Speaker Johnson, Minority Leader Jeffries, Chair Murray, Chairman Cole, Vice Chair Collins, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As New York State continues to face unprecedented wildfires in a year already plagued by disasters, we write to urge you to pass legislation as soon as possible to provide the supplemental funding needed to help New York, and communities across the country, recover from natural disasters.

Like many states, New York has experienced a variety of devastating natural disasters in recent years. Almost two years ago, a severe blizzard brought hurricane-force winds, mass power outages, and extreme cold to communities in Western New York, and particularly the Buffalo metropolitan area, tragically resulting in nearly 50 deaths. New York then experienced catastrophic flooding in July 2023, which caused widespread damage in numerous counties across New York State. Another severe storm hit New York less than three months later, resulting in extreme flash flooding in New York City, Long Island, and the Hudson Valley. And while the year is not finished, 2024 has also been tragic. New York experienced a major storm in July, and then two additional major storms in August, all three of which devastated communities across the State.

As New York continues the recovery and rebuilding process following these disasters and others in recent years, it is also actively dealing with an unprecedented emergency. New York State is currently experiencing record low rainfall, intensifying drought, and wildfire conditions, which has caused a historic surge of fires across the State. More than 400 fire departments statewide with over 1,300 personnel have been deployed to combat the fires and to assist with their containment. New York City has had more than 270 brush fires this month alone, the most in the city's history. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) was thankfully able to provide emergency assistance to support ongoing response efforts. However, unless the federal disaster relief programs are replenished, New York will not be able to receive the assistance needed to mitigate the potential risk and impacts of future fires.

In order to meet the ongoing recovery needs of New York and all communities suffering across the United States, Congress must pass a comprehensive disaster relief package to replenish the key federal disaster response programs and support long-term recovery efforts. Specifically, FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund, the Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Program, and the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Disaster Loan Program all must be replenished as soon as possible. Significant funding is critically needed for the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Emergency Relief Program, USDA's Emergency Watershed Protection Program, and USDA's Rural Development Disaster Assistance Fund, as well as the Department of Transportation's (DOT) Emergency Relief Program. Funding for Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds is also necessary to repair damaged water infrastructure and protect access to safe drinking water. President Biden's recent request for nearly \$100 billion in disaster aid details the precise levels of funding needed, and we urge you to pass legislation as soon as possible in line with his request.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Dan Goldman
Member of Congress

