

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

January 6, 2009

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write today to ask that you declare a major disaster for the State of Vermont, which will make the state eligible for federal funds necessary to recover from a devastating ice storm. As you know, Massachusetts, Maine and New Hampshire have also requested federal assistance due to the excessive damage from the same storm system. Federal funding is particularly needed for cleanup and recovery to public property and infrastructure as well as for hazard mitigation.

The storm system hit the region on Thursday, December 11th and brought with it heavy snow, sleet and freezing rain which caused dangerous driving conditions, and significant power outages. Up to 1 ½ inches of ice was reported on trees and power lines leaving many businesses unable to operate at full capacity for several days. The peak number of power outages was approximately 40,000 and centered mostly in Windham and Windsor counties. A full range of local and State services including the Vermont Chapter of the American Red Cross, police, fire and EMS were deployed to help respond to various emergency situations. In addition, numerous local and regional shelters were opened to provide heat, meals and other aid to community members that had been displaced from their homes.

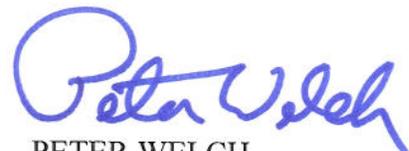
Representatives from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have visited several of the affected areas, and a preliminary damage assessment determined that well over \$1,000,000 in damage has occurred across the state. Counties in the State that suffered the most significant damage include Bennington, Windham, Windsor and Orange. Public Assistance funding is needed in order for our communities to fully recover from this event. In addition, communities across the State would greatly benefit from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, which is critical in helping to prevent future emergency situations.

We appreciate your swift consideration of the State of Vermont's appeal, and we hope you will approve its request. It is one of the greatest responsibilities of the federal government to ensure that state and local governments can recover from a natural disaster like this.

Sincerely,


PATRICK LEAHY
U.S. Senator


BERNARD SANDERS
U.S. Senator


PETER WELCH
U.S. Representative