

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, DC 20515

December 21, 2023

The Honorable Deanne Criswell  
Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Administrator Criswell:

We write in strong support of communities in New Hampshire after the devastating flooding and wind damage that occurred since last weekend. We urge the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to stand ready, should the state ask, to work with affected counties and the state government to respond to the damage from flooding and wind. We also ask FEMA to stand ready to make assistance available as expeditiously as possible if and when a request for a formal disaster declaration is made.

On December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023, a massive storm system swept across New England, bringing heavy, prolonged rain as well as winds with speeds approaching Category 1 hurricane force. Some of the heaviest rainfall in New England fell in central and northern New Hampshire.<sup>[1]</sup> Many places in our state recorded rainfall of 1.5 to 3 inches, with at least one community experiencing as much as six inches. This heavy rainfall was exacerbated by unseasonably warm temperatures that melted snow, which increased the water level in streams and rivers. Flash flood warnings were in effect over broad swaths of the state.

The National Weather Service (NWS) predicted “a historical river flooding event” in the North Country and White Mountain regions.<sup>[2]</sup> Thus far, there have been reports of rivers rising 10 feet or more in a number of places. Additionally, in its December 19<sup>th</sup> Hazardous Weather Outlook, the NWS projected that “[s]maller creeks and streams will continue to recede today...[h]owever, many larger mainstream rivers will continue to rise” for central, northern and southern New Hampshire. Consequently, flooding may actually worsen matters in some locations.

The effects of the heavy rainfall and flooding were felt throughout the state with numerous road closures due to rising water and full roadway washouts. In addition to transportation infrastructure being damaged, there are reports of homes being destroyed in northern New Hampshire and some residents having to be rescued by National Guard helicopter. The full extent of the damages throughout the state won't be known until the waters recede.

The flooding was worsened by the high wind damage wrought by gusts of up to 65 mph. Downed trees and branches led to power outages and blocked roads. There have been reports that many homes and businesses in New Hampshire lost power during the course of the storm.

State officials have said that much of the current damage is to infrastructure, and there is a concern that snow could soon fall and cover the damage, making a true accounting of the damage more difficult. Given the extensive flooding and wind damage, we call on FEMA to be prepared to participate

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<sup>[1]</sup> “Record-setting storm wallops East Coast with flooding, high winds,” Washington Post, By Matthew Cappucci, Jason Samenow and Brady Dennis, December 18, 2023, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/weather/2023/12/18/east-coast-storm-winds-flooding-outages/>.

<sup>[2]</sup> “White Mountains, North Country hit hard by storm that caused flooding, closed roads,” New Hampshire Public Radio, By Mara Hoplamazian and Daniela Allee, December 18, 2023, <https://www.nhpr.org/nh-news/2023-12-18/flash-flood-watch-in-effect-for-many-parts-of-new-hampshire>.

immediately in a Preliminary Damage Assessment with state and local officials, should the state request it.

Sincerely,



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Jeanne Shaheen  
United State Senator



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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



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Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress