

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

October 3, 2024

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

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

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro,

As Americans struggle to recover from Hurricane Helene, another devastating hurricane this season, we write to urge you to bring a supplemental disaster funding bill to the floor as soon as possible. It is important to all those affected across multiple states that we work to provide critical assistance to individuals and businesses recovering from multiple recent natural disasters, including in our home state of Texas after a derecho followed by Hurricane Beryl, both Presidentially declared disasters.

On July 8, 2024, Hurricane Beryl made landfall near Matagorda, Texas as a Category One Major Hurricane before moving inland toward the greater Houston region. In the wake of the storm, 2.6 million Texans lost power, leaving many people without power for as long as two weeks. We know that at least 42 people tragically lost their lives because of the storm and resulting infrastructure issues, mainly the loss of power. Local estimates for the cost of total damage have exceeded \$28 billion.

Making matters worse, Hurricane Beryl hit as Harris County residents were still recovering from heavy flooding in April and a derecho that hit the greater Houston region suddenly in May, causing catastrophic damage, killing seven people and inflicting the worst wind damage Houston has experienced in 25 years. Post-storm damage surveys conducted by the National Weather Service estimated that winds reached more than 100 miles per hour throughout downtown Houston. More than 4,000 windows were damaged in the downtown area alone. Three EF1 tornadoes accompanied this wind activity in the region. Local estimates for the cost of total damage have exceeded \$5 billion.

This is the second year in a row that FEMA's Disaster Relief Fund has run out of funding before the end of hurricane season. These funds are critical to ensuring FEMA can continue to help our community and others across the country recover from past disasters and mitigate future events. Earlier this year, FEMA took measures to conserve and redirect remaining funds to lifesaving missions, pausing assistance with recovery and rebuilding missions for prior disasters, which is

an equally important part of FEMA's goal. Already more than 650,000 Harris County residents have requested FEMA assistance, which is more assistance requests received than after any other disaster in the county's recent history. While we are glad to see that FEMA lifted the pause after the passage of the *Continuing Appropriations and Extensions Act, 2025*, H.R. 9747, with hurricane season still ongoing, additional funding is necessary to meet the unprecedented needs of our community.

We also note that, on June 28, President Biden called on Congress to pass a disaster supplemental, increasing the administration's October 2023 request by \$4 billion to reflect damage from recent disasters. The President's request does not include Hurricane Beryl or the derecho since damage estimates were not available at the time of the request. This information is now available, however, and any disaster supplemental that Congress considers should include all disasters in the 2024 calendar year.

We request that these relief funds be allocated directly to jurisdictions to the maximum extent possible so that local communities can deploy the funds quickly.

We look forward to working with you to ensure Texans obtain the resources they deserve to assist our state's efforts to rebuild and restore our communities. Our local communities are bearing the brunt of these disasters, and they require substantial financial support to respond and recover effectively. It is vital that they receive this support before Congress ends its work this year. We urge you to bring a disaster supplemental to the floor for consideration that includes funding for all communities across the country recovering in the wake of recent disasters. We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Wesley Hunt
Member of Congress



Troy Nehls
Member of Congress



Morgan Luttrell
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



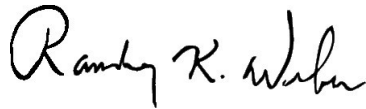
Colin Allred
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Dan Crenshaw
Member of Congress



Randy Weber
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Brian Babin
Member of Congress



Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress