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COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES
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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3201

September 20, 2024

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

Dear Mr. President,

I write to express my full support for Governor Kathy Hochul's request for a Major Disaster Declaration to assist the communities of Suffolk, Oswego, and Lewis Counties that were severely impacted by the record rainfall and flash flooding on August 18th. These unprecedented weather events caused substantial damage to critical infrastructure, including road collapses and mudslides, displaced families, and devastated homes and businesses. Federal assistance is crucial to ensure these communities can recover and rebuild effectively.

The flooding in Suffolk County, particularly, was so significant that it led to the first-ever flash flood emergency declaration by the National Weather Service for the area. This extreme weather event, characterized as a 1-in-1,000-year rain event, overwhelmed local resources and caused multiple road closures, swift water rescues, and the failure of the Mill Pond Dam in the Town of Brookhaven. Over 2,000 residents and businesses experienced substantial flood damage, and Stony Brook University was forced to cancel its scheduled move-in day, creating further disruptions to students and staff.

Governor Hochul's request for both Public Assistance and Individual Assistance from FEMA is necessary to cover the costs of debris removal, road repairs, and protective measures that are vital to restoring normalcy. Public Assistance will allow local governments to rebuild damaged infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water treatment facilities, and other essential services. Additionally, Individual Assistance is needed to help homeowners in Suffolk County recover from the damage to their homes and cover uninsured disaster-related expenses.

Given the widespread impact of these storms, I respectfully request your administration give full and fair consideration of Governor Hochul's request for a Major Disaster Declaration. I believe this federal support will be critical in helping our local governments, businesses, and families recover from the significant challenges posed by these severe weather events.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter, and I appreciate your consideration of New York's request for disaster assistance.

Sincerely,



Nick LaLota
Member of Congress