



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

October 9, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

President Trump:

Thank you for your visit to Louisiana to view the devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Laura and for your quick issuance of the Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Louisiana (FEMA-4559-DR-LA) and its subsequent amendments. We are writing today to ask that you use your authority under Section 1232 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act to adjust the Public Assistance cost share portion of the Declaration. This will ensure that communities already experiencing a decrease in revenue due to COVID-19 and the compounding impact of a particularly harsh storm season along the Gulf Coast will have the resources to participate in FEMA's disaster recovery programs.

As you know, during the early morning hours of August 27, 2020, Hurricane Laura made landfall in Cameron Parish, Louisiana near the Louisiana-Texas state line. As the storm moved inland, it brought greater than 100mph winds into populated areas well into the northern parishes of Louisiana, which resulted in devastating property losses. Current estimates on the cost of the damage from Hurricane Laura range from \$8 billion to \$12 billion and will undoubtedly continue to grow over the next several years. Further complicating the rebuilding efforts is Hurricane Delta, which is projected to follow a similar path to Hurricane Laura. Hurricane Delta is the sixth tropical storm to affect Louisiana this year and threatens to bring additional turmoil to an already devastated region.

Even prior to Hurricane Laura's landfall, State and local emergency response capabilities were stretched to the limits by the COVID-19 pandemic, Tropical Storm Cristobal, and Hurricane Marco. Section 1232 of the Disaster Recovery Reform Act, which you signed into law in 2018, instructed FEMA to consider the severe local impact created by multiple disasters or emergencies occurring in close geographical and chronological proximity when making recommendations regarding a major disaster declaration. These events have placed tremendous stress on precious emergency response resources and have diminished local and state revenue sources, exacerbating the physical destruction left in the wake of Hurricane Laura.

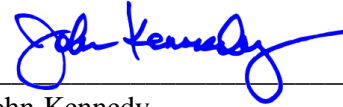
Granting a cost share adjustment for Public Assistance funds recognizes that the scale of current declared disaster, the negative economic effects of COVID-19, and the damage done by previous storms may be too great for state and local governments to absorb 25 percent of the recovery costs. Therefore, we ask that your administration not consider each impact in a vacuum but instead take into account the cumulative impacts of these storms, in conjunction with the economic damage caused by COVID-19 and grant the State of Louisiana a larger share of federal funding.

Thank you again your commitment to getting Louisiana back on its feet. We look forward to continuing to work with you and your Administration to ensure that Louisiana has the resources it needs to recover from the devastation caused by Hurricane Laura.

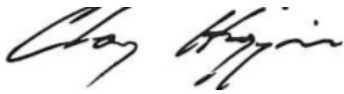
Respectfully,



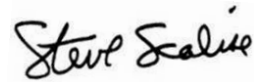
Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator



John Kennedy
United States Senator



Clay Higgins
United States Congressman



Steve Scalise
United States Congressman



Ralph Abraham, M.D.
United States Congressman



Garret Graves
United States Congressman



Mike Johnson
United States Congressman



Cedric Richmond
United States Congressman