

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 20, 2022

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge your immediate consideration of Governor Michael Dunleavy's request for a Major Disaster declaration under Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to support Alaska's recovery from the impact of Typhoon Merbok on Alaskan families, homes, businesses, schools, and infrastructure. This was the strongest storm in seventy years to impact our state. The damage to Western Alaska is extensive and federal assistance is essential to help Alaskans recover in the wake of this destructive event and mitigate against future severe weather events.

On September 16 to 18, 2022, remnants of Typhoon Merbok produced widespread destruction and severe damage to Western Alaska. Approximately one thousand miles of coastline were impacted. Residents are experiencing widespread flooding; power, water, and communication disruption; severe damage to private homes, personal property, and businesses.

Alaskans are resilient. Nowhere was this more evident than in the actions of our state and local emergency management teams, as well as the first responder and public works personnel in the hours leading up to the storm's landfall and now following the storm. Our State emergency response team members are working day and night to ensure that our communities are safe and that utilities, services, and major infrastructure are operational as soon as possible. Alaska's public servants are instrumental in mitigating the immediate impact of the storm in Western Alaska. However, much more needs to be done. Governor Dunleavy indicated in his request that the damage was of such severity and scale that additional federal assistance is necessary to supplement the actions of our State agencies. Because very cold weather and freeze-up in many parts of our state are a few weeks away, it is crucial that Alaska has the resources necessary to provide heating fuel for winter and to quickly continue the process of rebuilding.

Typhoon Merbok affected more than infrastructure: it is affecting Alaska's people – especially those in rural communities that, for example, did not have broadband access or easy access to supplies pre-storm, or for that matter any roads to their communities. Some Alaskans have lost their homes while others have lost vehicles essential to survival in rural communities and other personal property.

We are appreciative for the prompt attention your Administration and the Region 10 FEMA team have provided to the state during and immediately following the storm. We write with urgency to seek your quick approval of Governor Dunleavy's request given the scope of the damage, fast approaching winter weather, and overall impact on Alaskans. Thank you for your attention to this emergency matter.

Sincerely,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator



Dan Sullivan
United States Senator



Mary Sattler Peltola
Representative for All Alaska