



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Andy Beshear
GOVERNOR

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September 13, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D. C. 20502-0001

Through: Gracia B. Szczech
Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region IV
3005 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, GA 30341

Through: Brett Howard
Federal Emergency Management Agency Federal Coordinating Officer
FEMA-DR-4663-KY Joint Field Office
657 Chamberlain Avenue
Frankfort, KY 40601

Re: Request for 90% Federal Cost Share

Dear President Biden:

Under the provisions of Section 501 of the Robert T. Safford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), as implemented by 44 C. F. R. § 206.35, you declared a Major Disaster (4663-DR-KY) for the Commonwealth of Kentucky in response to a destructive and deadly weather system that impacted a significant portion of the Commonwealth. The event caused massive damage to public and private properties and the tragic loss of 39 Kentuckians.

On August 6, 2022, you issued a letter in which the cost sharing arrangements for this event were amended to increase federal funding for debris removal and emergency protective measures from 75 percent to 100 percent for a 30-day period within the first 120 days of the declaration. For this, the Commonwealth is grateful. While this will be helpful, I ask that you again consider the enormity of this event and the meager resources of impacted communities.

The Center for Disease Control, in collaboration with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, has developed the Social Vulnerability Index (SVI), which is considered the premier indicator of how communities are able to prepare for and respond to emergency events such as this flooding that impacted eastern Kentucky. Using census data, the index rates vulnerability from 0 (low) to 1 (high). Of the 20 declared counties, 18 have high SVI rankings. The remaining two counties have moderate SVIs. This index clearly demonstrates that the impacted communities will require extraordinary assistance to recover to even pre-disaster conditions.

These counties, which are in the Appalachian region of the state, have very small populations and, correspondingly, small tax bases and budgets. Four of the counties have populations of fewer than 10,000 citizens and annual budgets of less than \$10 million dollars. Nearly 14,000 people have sought assistance from the FEMA Individuals and Households Assistance Program. Given the number of destroyed homes and businesses, the impact to tax bases will be decimating. Further, we are greatly concerned that if counties are not able to adequately recover in an expedient manner, citizens will leave the area altogether.

The majority of the 20 counties included in Major Disaster Declaration DR-4663 are very sparsely populated. Consistent with small populations and limited tax rolls, the annual budgets of these counties are also sparse. Unfortunately, the tax base for many of these counties was seriously damaged, along with infrastructure, businesses, and homes. Future revenues will be severely impacted, reducing government services and causing a significant decline in the quality of life.

In addition, the frequency of disaster events in Kentucky has intensified over the past decade. There have been six major declared disasters (not including COVID-19) affecting eastern Kentucky in just the past 18 months. Of the 20 counties declared for DR-4663, the frequency includes two counties declared for all six disasters, 10 counties declared in five of the disasters, seven named in four of the disasters, and one county in two of the disasters. Compounding these weather events was the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic also hit these counties hard, disrupting normal commerce, education, and the delivery of health services.

Giving careful consideration of these conditions and circumstances, I respectfully ask that you again modify the disaster declaration to reflect a 90% federal cost share. The potential of a 25% match requirement, outside of the 30-day, 100% federal cost share period, is far beyond the capacity of local and state governments. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Andy Beshear
Governor