

October 06, 2017

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
S-128, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rodney Frelinghuysen
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

As co-chairs of the Council of Governors, we write to you regarding ongoing efforts in response to hurricanes Harvey, Irma and Maria. The Council thanks Congress for taking swift action to address the response and recovery needs by providing \$15 billion in emergency funding for disaster relief in September for the victims of Hurricane Harvey, which included \$7.4 billion for the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF).

In light of the devastating impact of Hurricanes Irma and Maria on Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, and the continued recovery efforts in Florida and Texas, we ask that Congress continue to act swiftly in providing additional emergency supplemental funding to ensure that critical assistance is provided to families and communities who have been devastated by these storms.

As you know, the National Guard has been critical in response and recovery efforts, with Guard units from across states providing affected states with manpower and equipment. States have done all this on a moment's notice, without thought to the impact on their own budgets and spending, as they know it is the right thing to do. However, the unprecedented scale of these disasters cannot be supported by states alone for such prolonged periods of time.

Over 20,000 Guardsmen were activated to respond to the terrible flooding in Texas after Hurricane Harvey. Over 8,000 Guardsmen are responding to the needs of Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, with search and rescue operations, distribution of food and water and providing security.

Along with manpower, Guard units are deploying helicopters, medevac aircraft, cargo aircraft, Humvees and other support vehicles as part of the response effort.

As you consider additional emergency supplemental requests from the Administration, we ask that you provide adequate funding through the DRF for our National Guardsmen to ensure they are properly resourced and reimbursed for their critical assistance in responding to these devastating natural disasters.

Sincerely,

Governor Mary Fallin
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

Governor Daniel Malloy
Co-Chair
Council of Governors

cc:

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell
Senate Minority Leaders Chuck Schumer
House Speaker Paul Ryan
House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi