

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2017

Acting Administrator Robert J. Fenton, Jr.
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear Acting Administrator Fenton:

We write in strong support of communities across upstate New York that were recently impacted by March's severe snowstorm. Specifically, we urge you to expeditiously approve New York State's request for a major disaster declaration for communities impacted by the storm.

On March 13, New York declared a state of emergency across all 62 counties in the state in advance of a snowstorm that produced record snowfall in some parts of upstate New York. While the forecast predicted snow for the entire state, with the heaviest snow on New York City and Long Island, the brunt of the storm ended up being felt further north and west, and plows, National Guardsmen, and other assets had to be re-deployed to different locations once the storm hit. Some areas in Dutchess and Broome Counties saw a record 31 inches of snow in a single 24-hour period, making the streets very difficult to plow and resulting in an extended county-wide travel ban. The American Red Cross opened up shelters and warming centers for those affected by the severe storm. Tragically, three deaths were associated with the storm.

During the storm and its immediate aftermath, normal daily activity came to a standstill, as schools were closed for days, and business and government offices were shuttered, while local and county DPW crews worked around the clock trying to clear roadways to make them navigable. Parts of the Mohawk Valley were hit by nearly three feet of snow, with snowfall rates approaching six inches per hour in some areas during the peak of the storm. Many school districts were closed and there were reports of motorists forced to abandon their cars on roadways. Twenty-nine counties suffered record or near-record level snow and damages from flooding in the aftermath of the storm. We would also note that when the snowstorm hit, Monroe and the surrounding counties were still dealing with the aftermath of the severe windstorm which downed thousands of trees and caused power outages for more than 200,000 customers. And several counties that saw record or near-record snow are now engaged in responding to ongoing historic flooding along Lake Ontario. With these back to back events impacting communities, federal assistance from FEMA is absolutely vital.

We are grateful for the prompt attention that the federal government has historically given to quickly responding to disasters impacting New York State. In that spirit, we strongly urge you to expeditiously approve the State's request for a major disaster declaration and Public Assistance for thirty counties across New York State.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Charles E. Schumer in blue ink.

Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

Handwritten signature of Kirsten Gillibrand in blue ink.

Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator