



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

October 23, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Cameron Hamilton
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear President Trump and Administrator Hamilton:

I am writing regarding the recent FEMA decision denying a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for Champaign, Cook, Ford, Fulton, McLean, Tazewell, Vermilion, and Will Counties following severe storms that impacted Illinois from August 11–16, 2026. These storms caused significant damage across Central and Northern Illinois, and within all relevant rules and regulations, I respectfully urge FEMA to reconsider the State's request and provide these communities with the federal assistance they need to recover and rebuild.

The multi-day severe weather event brought multiple rounds of severe storms, powerful winds, and flooding to the affected counties. Of the counties impacted, I am proud to represent parts or all of Ford, McLean, and Tazewell. In McLean County, the damage has been substantial. County officials have reported approximately \$42.5 million in damage, with the severe winds and storms leaving behind toppled trees and power lines, flooding, and significant property damage. The Normal Fire Department responded to a record number of calls during a 24-hour shift, stretching emergency services across the area. In Bloomington alone, crews have hauled away more than 2,300 loads of brush debris and 500 tons of bulk waste in the weeks following the storms, and several regional hospitals and other community facilities faced significant damage.

A possible reversal of FEMA's decision is also supported by statewide damage assessments that indicate the overall weather event meets FEMA's thresholds for disaster assistance. McLean County is among the counties that met FEMA's local damage threshold, underscoring the direct and significant impact on communities I represent. I respectfully encourage FEMA to give renewed consideration to the concentration of damage in particularly hard-hit communities, and any additional assessments that may help establish the full extent of the damage.

I recognize FEMA's important responsibility to carefully evaluate disaster declaration requests and ensure that federal assistance is directed where it is warranted. At the same time, the documented damage and the demands placed on state and local resources demonstrate a compelling case for additional federal support. This assistance would help ensure that affected

residents and local governments in my district have the resources necessary to complete the recovery process and better prepare for future severe weather events.

Disaster recovery requires cooperation among local, state, and federal partners. I respectfully urge FEMA to reconsider Illinois' request and give timely consideration to any appeal that may be filed by the State to ensure that Ford, McLean, and Tazewell Counties in my district, and other affected Illinois communities can access the federal resources they need to recover and rebuild. Thank you for your consideration of this important matter and for your continued work supporting disaster response and recovery efforts across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Darin LaHood". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Darin LaHood
Member of Congress