

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2026

Karen S. Evans  
Senior Official Performing the Duties of the Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Ms. Evans:

On February 7, 2026, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denied the State of Vermont's appeal for a Major Disaster Declaration following a devastating storm and flooding on July 10, 2025.<sup>1</sup> We write to request an explanation of FEMA's denial of Vermont's appeal.

In July 2025, Vermont experienced its third consecutive year of severe flooding.<sup>2</sup> Flash floods required swift water rescue operations; damaging winds and hail downed power lines and trees; and towns faced significant structural losses.<sup>3</sup> The damage from the July 2025 flooding is estimated to be \$1.85 million, exceeding FEMA's \$1.2 million threshold for a Major Disaster Declaration.<sup>4</sup>

In August 2025, Vermont Governor Phil Scott requested a Major Disaster Declaration from FEMA to support recovery from this latest round of severe flooding.<sup>5</sup> In October 2025, FEMA denied Vermont's request, which would have provided Public Assistance for Caledonia and Essex Counties and Hazard Mitigation statewide.<sup>6</sup> In November 2025, Governor Scott appealed this determination, underscoring that the 2025 flooding brought several Vermont communities to the brink of financial disaster.<sup>7</sup> FEMA issued a letter on February 7, 2026, denying that appeal. The sole reason provided for the denial was, "supplemental federal assistance under the Stafford Act is not warranted."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Letter from Karen Evans, Senior Official Performing the Duties of the FEMA Administrator, to Governor Phil Scott (Feb. 7, 2026), [https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2026/02/VT-DEC-Request-Appeal-Denial-Letter-for-July-2025\\_.pdf](https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2026/02/VT-DEC-Request-Appeal-Denial-Letter-for-July-2025_.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> See Robert Haynes, *Localized Flooding and Severe Thunderstorms on July 10<sup>th</sup> 2025*, NOAA (Aug. 5, 2025), <https://www.weather.gov/btv/Localized-Flooding-And-Severe-Thunderstorms-On-July-10th-2025>.

<sup>3</sup> See *id.*

<sup>4</sup> See Emma Cotton, *FEMA Denies Disaster Aid for 2025 Flooding, Leaving NEK Towns Scrambling*, VT DIGGER (Feb. 9, 2026), <https://vtdigger.org/2026/02/09/fema-denies-disaster-aid-for-2025-flooding-leaving-nek-towns-scrambling/>.

<sup>5</sup> See *id.*

<sup>6</sup> See *Governor Phil Scott Submits Appeal of Disaster Declaration Denial*, VERMONT GOV. (Nov. 21, 2025), <https://governor.vermont.gov/press-release/governor-phil-scott-submits-appeal-disaster-declaration-denial>.

<sup>7</sup> See Cotton, *supra* note 4.

<sup>8</sup> See Karen Evans, *supra* note 1.

The State of Vermont has now endured three back-to-back years of severe, debilitating flooding. Vermonters have been left reeling from these storms as they work to rebuild their communities. Federal support that comes with a Major Disaster Declaration is critical to advancing the State's recovery efforts.

To better understand FEMA's basis for the denial, we request that the agency provide a detailed explanation of the decision by March 2, 2026.

Sincerely,



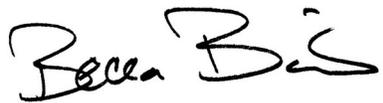
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Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



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Peter Welch  
United States Senator



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Becca Balint  
Member of Congress