

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 2, 2025

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

Dear Mr. President:

Once again, we write to you appalled and deeply concerned with your decision to deny Washington state's request for a Major Disaster Declaration.

As we previously have written, last year's bomb cyclone had a devastating, lasting effect on the state's electrical grid, public roads, wastewater treatment, emergency operations, and government facilities. Communities endured an unusually long period of strain for nine straight days, characterized by hurricane-force winds over 70 miles per hour, intense mountain snowfall, coastal and inland flooding, and erosion. Uncommon strong winds caused thousands of trees to fall, damaging homes, blocking roads, and crippling power lines. More than 650,000 residents experienced power outages, with many losing power for more than a week.

In consultation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment was completed detailing over \$34 million in verified damages. As you know, FEMA uses six factors to assess a request for Public Assistance (PA), and Washington state has met all of them. This includes the \$1.89 per-capita threshold that FEMA uses to determine whether a natural disaster warrants federal relief. Damages from the bomb cyclone surged past that threshold at \$4.72 per-capita, 133.86% more than the threshold. That figure encapsulates only a portion of the true costs to damage as assessments and repairs are still ongoing, and continue to rise on the long road to recovery.

The denial of Washington state's disaster declaration is a departure from previous precedent. Seven requests for a declaration have been granted in the last three years from a range of states with striking similarities to the November 2024 bomb cyclone, including power outages, infrastructure damages, and emergency response costs.¹ It is also particularly troubling that you have denied six of ten major disaster requests from Democratic governors, but have approved fourteen of the fifteen requests from Republican governors.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a full and transparent explanation of the original denial, including responses to the following questions:

1. On what basis was Washington state's request denied?
2. What additional information—beyond what was initially submitted—was requested of Washington state to inform the decision?
3. What calculations (e.g. per capita calculations) were used in evaluating the request, and how do those compare to the standards and criteria typically used for recommending a disaster declaration?

¹ This includes DR-4769 Severe Winter Storms, Tornadoes, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides, DR-4712 Severe Storms, Straight-line Winds, and Tornado, and DR-4654 Severe Winter Storms and Straight-Line Winds.

4. How do these calculations compare to those used in disaster declaration decisions for other states this year?
5. What was the timeline and nature of communication between FEMA and Washington state regarding requests for additional information, and when was that information provided?

Our district offices have fielded countless calls and messages with harrowing accounts of our constituencies' experience with the bomb cyclone event, and mayors, city councils, Tribal officials and other local officials have asked whether the federal government will meet the moment. Our constituents deserve to know the grounds on which you have denied the assistance they need.

Sincerely,



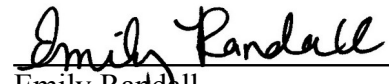
Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress