

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 15, 2015

COMMITTEES:
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION
FOREIGN RELATIONS
SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SMALL BUSINESS AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

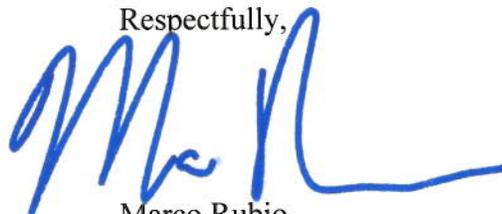
Dear Mr. President,

As you may know, from late July to early August, heavy rainfall battered Florida's central west coast, resulting in amounts of 10 to 20 inches. The counties of Dixie, Hillsborough, Pasco, Pinellas and Taylor experienced numerous days of heavy rainfall that resulted in severe flooding. As the State of Florida continues to address the effects of this record-breaking rain, I urge you to reconsider Governor Rick Scott's August 25, 2015 request for a Major Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance.

The severe weather events last month caused significant damage to numerous homes, businesses, transportation networks, and public infrastructure. These hard hit areas are home to populations that are more susceptible to economic hardship. Taylor, Dixie and Hillsborough are above the national average for persons living below the poverty level. Two of the counties, Taylor and Dixie, have a disabled population approximately two times higher than the national average. Dixie, Pasco and Pinellas Counties consist of a significant elderly population, which equates to one and a half times higher than the national average. And, according to the 2010 census, the five counties affected had an unemployment rate higher than that of the national average.

As noted in Governor Scott's September 11, 2015 appeal letter, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), the Small Business Administration, and state and local officials worked together on preliminary damage assessments. It was this joint effort that prompted Governor Scott to request a Major Disaster Declaration on August 25, 2015. On September 3, 2015, FEMA denied the State's request without cause or explanation. As Floridians continue to reel from the effects of last month's torrential rains and flooding, I respectfully request you consider Governor Scott's appeal for a Major Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance for the five impacted counties.

Respectfully,



Marco Rubio
United States Senator