

May 31, 2022

President Joe Biden  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President:

With tomorrow marking the official start to the 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season and a potential disturbance forming near the Gulf of Mexico, I once again urge your administration to conduct a comprehensive review of all existing federal regulations that can be relaxed in order to guarantee more effective and orderly relief efforts in the event of landfall.

The 2021 Atlantic Hurricane Season was among the most prolific on record, having produced 21 named storms, including seven hurricanes, four of which were major. It came in the wake of the most active Atlantic hurricane season in recorded history in 2020, exacerbating an already extensive recovery effort. Other ongoing challenges are also testing the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) ability to respond to this unprecedented two-year period, including additional natural disasters around the nation, direct and indirect consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and a historic immigration crisis at the Southern border.

Floridians know better than anyone the often needlessly complex and disjointed nature of our disaster recovery process. Americans should have confidence that the federal government will assist in supplying the recovery resources they need in a straightforward, timely manner during the 2022 Atlantic Hurricane Season. To ensure that this is the case, your administration must act now to reduce needless bureaucratic inefficiencies. You should start by cutting or pausing unnecessary federal rules. By mitigating regulatory obstacles that impede rebuilding in a hurricane's aftermath, you will ease the burden felt by Americans struggling to recover amid a uniquely devastating chapter of their lives.

In particular, I urge you to heed the following recommendations, which will reduce the regulatory burden on Floridians, and other Americans, and enable them to instead devote their energy to safe preparation and recovery activities:

- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services must improve coordination with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) when a major disaster declaration is issued, and use its authorities to the maximum extent possible to efficiently provide aid to persons and populations in need.
- The DoD should use existing authorities to rapidly repair installations that are regularly impacted by natural disasters, and create a list of installations that are more prone to being threatened or damaged by natural disasters.

- The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs should move to ensure that veterans living in rural areas, such as the Florida Panhandle and the Florida Keys, have a full suite of medical service options available to them in their own communities as roads and highways are impacted by debris, flooding, traffic, and emergency response activities.
- The Federal Aviation Administration should explore disaster policies whereby drone regulations can be temporarily and safely lifted during disaster declarations to facilitate emergency relief efforts, such as helping victims obtain medications when the roads to their homes are obstructed.
- FEMA should ensure that it is expeditiously reimbursing local governments and electric cooperatives for interest incurred on loans used to restore power and other critical functions in the wake of a storm.
- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) should guarantee that there are sufficient protections in place for residents of HUD-assisted properties to prevent them from being forced back into living conditions that may have been made unsafe and unsanitary following a disaster.
- The U.S. Department of Labor should look to provide more flexibility to ensure that business reporting requirements do not paralyze businesses and workers whose most immediate priority should be providing assistance.
- The Internal Revenue Service should delay filing deadlines when necessary and consider rule reforms that enable disaster victims to make penalty-free early withdrawals from 401(k) and other retirement accounts.

By cutting or pausing onerous, often duplicative regulations, your administration can ease the burden faced by Americans working together to rebuild their communities in a hurricane's wake. I respectfully request that your administration work directly with my office and the State of Florida to ease any other regulatory burdens associated with federal disaster relief and recovery that may require Congressional assistance.

Thank you for your prompt attention and consideration on behalf of Floridians and all Americans who may be impacted during this year's hurricane season.

Sincerely,



Marco Rubio  
U.S. Senator