Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

May 2, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing in support of Governor Mike Beebe's request for a major disaster declaration for the following counties in the State of Arkansas: Benton, Clay, Faulkner, Garland, Lincoln, Pulaski, Randolph, and Saline Counties, and Hazard Mitigation statewide. The Governor further requested direct Federal assistance.

Beginning on April 14, 2011, these counties experienced severe storms, tornadoes and flooding. Preliminary assessments indicate that the most severe impact was to private homes, businesses and public utilities. As we see in many crises, people have come to the aid of their neighbors, but further assistance is needed.

Pursuant to the provision of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, we ask that Arkansas receive a major disaster declaration for these counties due to the damage assessed. We would also like to specifically request Individual Assistance (IA), including the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), to provide Temporary Housing to include manufactured housing (mobile homes, park models, etc.), Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Small Business Administration disaster loans, Hazard Mitigation Statewide, and Direct Federal Assistance.

As you know, the State of Arkansas and its rural districts are working tirelessly to save lives and begin the process of cleaning up and ultimately rebuilding. All available resources at the state and local level, including the Arkansas National Guard, are being used, but greater federal assistance is needed to help our communities recover. Arkansas is a predominantly rural state and this series of disasters has exceeded the ability of our local governments to respond. The past several years have been particularly difficult for Arkansas residents due to numerous severe weather events. We appreciate the financial assistance received as a result of several federal disaster and emergency declarations, many of which impacted the same communities still in the recovery process, and the quick, comprehensive response of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. We hope that a similar response will follow this disaster.

Administrator Fugate, we respectfully request your swift consideration and approval of this request. If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

U.S. Senator Mark Pryor

U.S. Senator John Boozman

U.S. Representative Rick Crawford

U.S. Representative Tim Griffin

U.S. Representative Steve Womack

U.S. Representative Mike Ross