

September 21, 2004

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

In light of the extensive damage recently caused by Tropical Storm Ivan in Northeastern Pennsylvania, I am writing today to strongly urge you to expand your disaster declaration to include the counties of Columbia, Carbon and Monroe. As you know, Ivan severely affected this region causing significant damage to several residential communities and commercial properties.

Rectifying the damages sustained in each of these counties is well beyond the financial capacities of the affected local municipal governments. Monroe County suffered extensive damages totaling several millions of dollars due to flooding that occurred when the Delaware River overflowed its banks. Similarly, Columbia County suffered millions in damages to approximately 250 homes and 35 businesses including two of the county's major commercial centers, the Bloomsburg Fair Grounds and the Magee Reiter Automotive Systems plant. Carbon County has suffered damages to approximately 100 homes, and expects that the overall level of damages will exceed those suffered in the last federally declared disaster in 1996.

Governor Edward Rendell included both Columbia and Monroe Counties in his original disaster declaration and has subsequently amended that declaration to include Carbon County. An expanded federal declaration is absolutely essential to ensuring that the entire region can recover from this disaster in an effective and efficient manner. Each of these counties are bordered by counties that were included in your initial declaration, and the extent of the damages to these three counties are similar to those suffered in the Pennsylvania Counties currently eligible for federal disaster assistance caused by Tropical Storms Frances and Ivan.

Thank you for your timely consideration of this matter and your earlier disaster declaration for counties in Northeastern Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,

Paul E. Kanjorski
Member of Congress