

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 16, 2016

The Honorable William Craig Fugate
Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Administrator Fugate:

We write in support of the State of Montana's request for disaster assistance in responding to the heavy snows and strong winds in north central Montana that caused severe impacts to travel, commerce and infrastructure from April 14-16, 2016. The resulting damage from this storm impacted Montana's rural communities, severely damaged local infrastructure, and left thousands of residents and commercial customers without electricity.

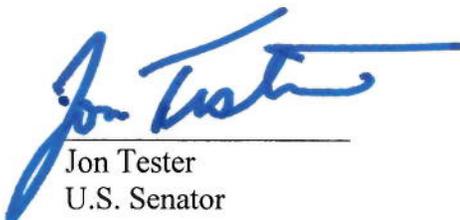
A strong low-pressure system, along with abundant moisture and cool temperatures, passed over Montana from April 14-16, 2016. While the amounts of snowfall varied across the region, high levels of heavy, wet snow fell as wind gusts reached up to 35 mph. The storm resulted in numerous downed trees and power lines which left more than 21,000 residential and commercial customers without power. Utility companies suffered damage to at least 750 power poles, with extensive damage also being reported to their distribution lines and pole-mounted transformers. Additionally, Pondera County suffered miles of damage to primary and secondary roadways.

The counties impacted the most by these storms are Glacier, Liberty, Pondera, Teton, and Toole. Montana Governor Steve Bullock requested that a major disaster for the State of Montana be declared as of April 15, 2016 and the State is in urgent need of federal assistance.

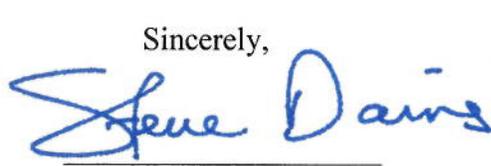
The amount of resources required to meet the needs of our communities as they recover from this storm outstrips the ability of our State and local governments to pay for these damages. The State of Montana remains committed to providing all available resources to assist these communities, but the damage caused cannot solely fall to the State alone. These communities urgently need federal resources in order to help them restore their infrastructure and way of life.

Delays in funding to these Montana counties would be extremely harmful to affected small businesses and communities. We ask that you approve the State of Montana's funding request as soon as possible and thank you for your attention to this request.

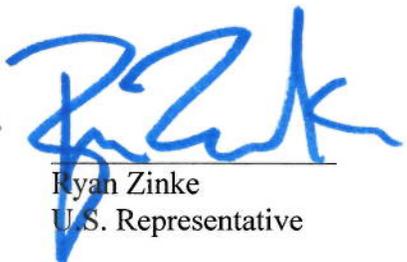
Sincerely,



Jon Tester
U.S. Senator



Steve Daines
U.S. Senator



Ryan Zinke
U.S. Representative