

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 16, 2024

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden,

As the Southeastern United States continues to respond to life-threatening conditions in the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the sheer scope of the destruction from these hurricanes is heartbreaking. We urgently request the White House's Office of Management and Budget rapidly submit to Congress a detailed supplemental appropriations request that considers the full cost of recovering from Hurricanes Helene and Milton, as well as other devastating natural disasters, so Congress can quickly consider supplemental appropriations this year, and affected communities can begin to heal.

Hurricane Helene struck Florida's coast as a Category 4 storm on September 27 before devastating communities across Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Tragically, the death toll continues to rise, with 228 being confirmed to date.¹ Hurricane Milton struck Florida on October 9, bringing life-threatening storm surges and wind gusts and causing 24 deaths to date.²

We are immensely grateful to first responders and federal workers as they perform life-saving work. However, the task of recovering from these storms has overwhelmed state and local governments. Federal support will be needed to restore and rebuild our communities.

While the recovery costs are still being determined, estimates of Hurricane Helene's damage range from \$34 billion³ to \$47 billion.⁴ Hurricane Milton is likewise expected to cost billions more in damages.⁵

¹ Fernando Cervantes Jr. and Dinah Voyles Pulver, *Beyond Helene: Hurricane Death Toll Tops 300 Lives, with Month Left in Season*, USA Today (Oct. 15, 2024), <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/weather/2024/10/15/hurricane-deaths-2024-helene-milton-atlantic-season/75678995007>.

² C.A. Bridges, *Hurricane Milton Death Toll Up to 24, According to FDLE. Here's Where*, USA Today Network – Florida (Oct. 15, 2024), <https://www.news-journalonline.com/story/weather/hurricane/2024/10/15/hurricane-milton-death-toll-florida-tuesday/75683596007>.

³ Kit Norton, *Hurricane Helene Economic Price Tag Could Be \$34 Billion; The Stock Market Impact*, *Investor's Business Daily* (Oct. 1, 2024), <https://www.investors.com/news/hurricane-helene-34-billion-price-tag-stock-market-impact> (describing Moody's Analytics estimate).

⁴ *CoreLogic: Final Estimated Damages for Hurricane Helene to Be Between \$30.5 Billion and \$47.5 Billion*, CoreLogic (Oct. 4, 2024), <https://www.corelogic.com/press-releases/corelogic-final-estimated-damages-for-hurricane-helene-to-be-between-30-5-billion-and-47-5-billion>.

⁵ E.g., Edward Helmore and Anna Betts, *Biden Says Hurricane Milton Caused Staggering \$50bn in Estimated Damage*, *The Guardian* (Oct. 11, 2024), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2024/oct/11/florida-in-hurricane->

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will require significant additional funding to ensure it has the resources it needs for Hurricane Helene and Milton recovery, and additional federal funding will be required to support states and federal agencies' emergency response efforts. Likewise, as communities begin to rebuild, uninterrupted access to key disaster assistance loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration is imperative. Agricultural producers will also need financial assistance to help them recover from yet another natural disaster that is further compounding their already tenuous economic situation, and small businesses will need support to help cover the damage to their livelihoods and rebuild, so they can reopen their doors to communities.

Given the immense need, we respectfully ask that the Office of Management and Budget work quickly to determine the costs of recovering from Hurricane Helene and Milton and immediately submit a supplemental appropriations request to Congress that includes this full cost.

Congress stands ready to ensure the federal government and our communities have what they need to recover from Hurricanes Helene and Milton and future natural disasters.

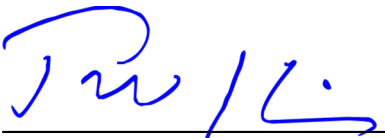
Sincerely,



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Thom Tillis
United States Senator



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Ted Budd
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator