

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 12, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.
Washington D.C. 20050

Dear President Biden:

We write today in strong support of the Commonwealth of Virginia's request for an emergency declaration under the provisions of Section 501 (a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act). This request was made by the Commonwealth due to potential civil unrest associated with the 59th Presidential Inauguration, anticipated demonstration activities in Richmond, Virginia, and other related events from January 6, 2021 to February 4, 2021.

On January 14, 2021, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam requested emergency protective measures, including direct Federal assistance, under the Public Assistance program at 100 percent Federal funding for the Commonwealth in light of the unprecedented security environment surrounding the 59th Presidential Inauguration and the potential for further civil unrest in the District of Columbia and Commonwealth of Virginia. Shockingly, on January 17, 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) rejected this request – along with a similar request from the State of Maryland.

We firmly believe that a declaration of emergency is merited and necessary. In response to the attack on the United States Capitol, Virginia law enforcement personnel responded quickly to help secure the Capitol from violent insurrectionists. Nearly 3000 Virginia National Guard personnel were deployed to the District of Columbia to provide security for the 59th Presidential Inauguration and related events. In addition to Virginia's role in increasing the security posture of the Nation's Capital, protest activities with an elevated of risk of violence required the Commonwealth to prepare and respond to emergencies beyond the National Capital Region, particularly in Richmond, Virginia.

In light of Virginia's critical role in providing support during this period of increased civil unrest, we urge you to approve the Commonwealth's appeal for an emergency declaration and direct federal assistance with a 100 percent reimbursement. It is evident the Commonwealth's response to these unprecedented events was instrumental in saving lives, protecting property, and ensuring public safety. These actions came at substantial cost to the Commonwealth and supplementary Federal assistance is necessary to complete this effort.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Mark R. Warner
MARK R. WARNER
United States Senator

/s/ Tim Kaine
TIM Kaine
United States Senator