

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 18, 2018

Chairman Richard Shelby  
United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy  
United States Senate  
Committee on Appropriations  
Room S-128, The Capitol  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Vice Chairman Leahy:

As Senators representing North Carolina and South Carolina we write as an evolving and ongoing disaster continues to unfold in our states. Almost two years since Hurricane Matthew inflicted historic ocean surge and inland flooding throughout the Carolinas, resulting in billions of dollars in damages, Hurricane Florence is inflicting catastrophic flooding in many of the same areas. Tens of thousands have evacuated coastal and low-lying areas, and hundreds have had to be rescued as flood waters continue to rise.

The damage from this storm in our states will be historic. In the initial 72 hours, the storm brought several areas over 30 inches of rain, far surpassing previous state records for storm rainfall. Areas throughout North Carolina and South Carolina have received rain amounts measuring several feet. The flood emergency across our states will continue with numerous river basins already forecasted to reach major flood stage over the next week. Many of these basins and adjacent communities received substantial damage from flooding over the last three years from previous storms including Hurricane Joaquin and Matthew.

As a result of Hurricane Florence, over 1.1 million people throughout the Carolinas were left without power, nearly 20,000 residents remain in shelters, hundreds of roads have been closed, and at least 23 individuals have died. This destruction is on pace to cause twice the damage that stemmed from Hurricane Matthew.

Eighteen counties in North Carolina, as well as eight counties in South Carolina, have received a Major Disaster declaration from the President, and both North and South Carolina still have a federal emergency declaration in place. Communications and power remain limited and major interstates and highways will remain closed for the foreseeable future. While the totality of the damage will not be known for weeks, as many cities and counties are cut off by debris and flooding, the initial damage estimates we received from our states indicate over \$2.811 billion in North Carolina and at least \$1.328 billion in South Carolina. Based on these initial estimates and damage

comparisons from recent weather events, we respectfully request an initial down payment of \$1.14 billion in Community Development Block Grant Disaster Recovery Fund (CDBG-DR) funding for North Carolina and \$540 million in CDBG-DR funding for South Carolina.

Additionally, it is our understanding the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Disaster Relief Fund (DRF), Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster loans, the Flood Control & Coastal Emergencies (FC&CE) account, and the Department of Agriculture's (USDA) disaster assistance programs will all need to be accessed by our states and localities to quickly begin the rebuilding process. You have already begun to be responsive to the impact of Florence by including an additional \$7.9 billion in immediately accessible DRF funding in the *Department of Defense and Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations Act, 2019*. We thank you for this and look forward to continuing to work with you to ensure the DRF, CDBG-DR, SBA, FC&CE and USDA's disaster assistance accounts have sufficient funding and authorities to quickly begin the recovery and rebuilding process in the Carolinas.

As we get additional assessments on the storm's total impact, we plan to work with the Administration and your committee to ensure funds are available in accounts for the National Flood Insurance Program and Department of Transportation as well as others.

We are committed to identifying and utilizing an appropriate legislative vehicle in the coming weeks to provide a first installment of emergency appropriations. We thank you for your attention to the needs of our communities and we look forward to working with you to help our states recover.

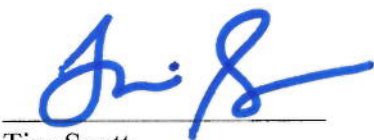
Sincerely,



Lindsey O. Graham  
United States Senator



Richard Burr  
United States Senator



Tim Scott  
United States Senator



Thom Tillis  
United States Senator