

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 12, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20515

We are asking that you accept our earnest appeal for reconsideration of your November 20, 2007, decision to deny major disaster relief funding for the State of Indiana. On October 18, 2007, Indiana was devastated by severe storms, damaging winds, and a one-half mile wide tornado that created a path of destruction over 20 miles long. Consequently, the infrastructure of Indiana has suffered, with hundreds of homes, and businesses experiencing extensive damage. An emergency exists, and we urge you to reconsider your earlier denial of major disaster relief funding for Marshall, Kosciusko and Elkhart Counties.

In early December, the Indiana Department of Homeland Security investigated the impacted counties and their findings reiterate the need for federal assistance to help the storms victims recover. Their report reveals numerous residents with homes destroyed by the storm do not have enough insurance to cover the damages—almost 60 percent of the low income housing had not yet begun to make repairs—and many small businesses have not started repairs or demolition. Moreover, in this tight-knit community, numerous local volunteers and agencies began the clean up process immediately following the storm, before the investigation. To this end, the actual damage incurred by the storm is far more extensive than the report reveals.

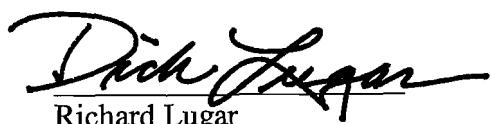
While the total number of affected people may seem small, to the small rural Elkhart County community of Nappanee, where the preponderance of the damage occurred, the effect is devastating. Although wildfires in California have reportedly affected thousands of people, the number represents a relatively-small percentage of the millions of people who live in the San Diego and Los Angeles area-compared to potentially 50 percent of people in Nappanee who are facing employment problems. We point this out not to take away from the devastation caused by the fires in California, but to demonstrate the tornado's proportionally-greater impact on Nappanee. Smaller communities are entitled to receive the exact same treatment and attention as larger cities.

Despite the emergency assistance provided by the voluntary agencies, many of storm's victims are struggling to recover. Voluntary agencies estimate that volunteer clean-up efforts will total \$2 million and that hundreds of thousands of dollars in donations will be required to assist victims in the immediate future. Based on the extent of the damage, timely federal assistance is essential to ensure that local government agencies, businesses and families impacted by these events are able to recover in a suitable manner. The combined expenses of on-going regular emergency assistance and

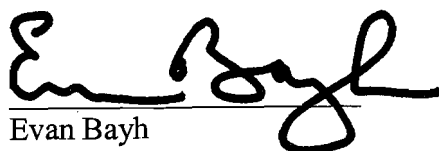
the breadth of concerns expressed by voluntary agencies illustrate a need to for federal emergency assistance.

We respectfully ask that you carefully review this appeal and provide assistance for the hundreds of families that were affected by this disaster.

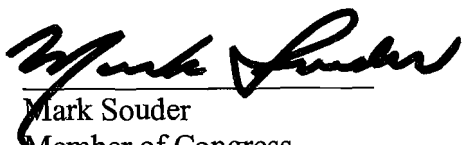
Respectfully,



Richard Lugar
United States Senator



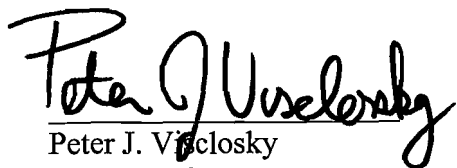
Evan Bayh
United States Senator



Mark Souder
Member of Congress



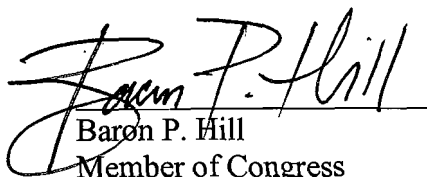
Dan Burton
Member of Congress




Peter J. Visclosky
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Steve Buyer
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Mike Pence
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Joe Donnelly
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