Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 4, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We strongly support Governor Jared Polis' request on October 31, 2026, for an expedited Presidential Major Disaster Declaration for Southwestern Colorado and the San Luis Valley in response to the recent extensive and devastating flooding throughout the region. While this request pertains to the initial flooding on October 22-25, we are writing in the midst of a second catastrophic flooding event across the same region, which adds urgency to this request. These impacts are compounded by the damaging flooding in October 2025, which have seriously strained available resources for recovery for previously affected communities.

Beginning October 22, 2026, torrential rain fell on the San Juan Mountains and San Luis Valley, already saturated by weeks of rainfall. During this initial flooding event, the San Juan River in Pagosa Springs crested at its second-highest level since 1911, and the Rio Grande reached approximately 11,000 cubic feet per second, surpassing its 1949 record. Although assessments are ongoing, totals showed the initial flooding damaged approximately 700 homes across Archuleta and Rio Grande Counties, completely destroying 16 homes and 6 commercial buildings. The flooding caused extensive damage to multiple roads and bridges, overwhelmed wastewater systems, and contaminated private wells. The Colorado National Guard airlifted stranded residents to safety, and we are grateful that no fatalities have been reported.

As outlined in the Governor's expedited request, the affected counties and Tribe have suffered damages severe enough to qualify for the Public Assistance (PA) Program. The Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment validated $26,989,000 in PA-eligible damages. As assessments continue, additional losses are likely to be identified with additional assistance requested. Granting the Governor's initial request for Archuleta and Rio Grande Counties will expedite urgent repairs for public infrastructure damages.

The State of Colorado is also requesting the activation of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for these counties in order to implement better infrastructure solutions to protect against future monsoon seasons and flood events. As these local communities have historically been proudly self-reliant, they are eager to rebuild more resiliently.

Successful recovery is essential to restoring these communities' economies, which depend on agriculture, tourism, outdoor recreation, and hunting and fishing. In already isolated rural areas, road closures are cutting residents off from their homes, schools, work, and essential services. We appreciate the Federal Highway Administration moving quickly to approve $6.5 million in quick release funds to help with immediate repairs on US Highway 160, US 550, and Colorado Highway 151, all which provide critical routes into the communities most impacted by this disaster. Without additional support, residents could face unsafe homes and drinking water, long delays in rebuilding critical roads and bridges, and the loss of local businesses.

We thank you in advance for your expedited review and approval of the Governor's request for a Major Disaster Declaration.

Sincerely,

Jeff Hurd
Member of Congress

John Hickenlooper
United States Senator

Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

Brittany Pettersen
Member of Congress

Joe Neguse
Member of Congress

Gabe Evans
Member of Congress

Jeff Crank
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress