

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 24th, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

We write in support of New York State's request for a Major Disaster Declaration to support the ongoing recovery of communities impacted by Winter Storm Elliott in December 2022. This devastating storm was unlike anything New York State has ever seen. Over forty New Yorkers lost their lives due to these harsh conditions. In fact, Winter Storm Elliott was so significant it received international coverage. We are asking the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to recognize the historic nature of this storm and that it truly was a snowstorm of record that left a significant need for federal assistance by granting the Presidential Major Disaster Declaration that includes snow assistance.

Winter Storm Elliott was one of the most devastating snowstorms to hit any City. First Responders, pre-positioned in advance of the storm in and around the Buffalo area, were unable to deploy for as many as eighteen hours after the storm hit. At one point, nearly two-thirds of response vehicles deployed got stuck themselves. Sustained blizzard conditions battered Western New York for over thirty-seven hours, making this storm the longest lasting blizzard in New York state history by a factor of two and the longest blizzard in the continental United States below 5,000 ft of elevation. Additionally, Mesonet stations within the affected areas recorded the coldest ever windchill (-40F) and the highest sustained winds (79.4 mph) in Mesonet history.

New York State and the affected communities worked with FEMA to complete the damage assessment. As a result, New York State is specifically requesting:

- Public Assistance for Erie, Genesee, Niagara, St. Lawrence, and Suffolk Counties, including Snow Assistance for Erie, Genesee, Niagara and St. Lawrence Counties to reimburse localities for snow removal operations.
- Additional Funeral Assistance and Crisis Counseling for the residents of Erie and Niagara Counties.

- Given the historic and record-setting nature of this event, we request that FEMA recognize Winter Storm Elliott as a snowstorm of record and strongly support granting New York State a Major Disaster Declaration that includes snow assistance.

cc: David Warrington
Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region II
1 World Trade Center
New York, NY 10007

Respectfully,



Nick Langworthy
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress