



# STATE OF MINNESOTA

## Office of Governor Mark Dayton

130 State Capitol ♦ 75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard ♦ Saint Paul, MN 55155

November 16, 2016

Elizabeth Zimmerman  
Associate Administrator, Office of Response and Recovery  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20472

Through:

Janet Odeshoo  
Acting Regional Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region V  
536 South Clark Street, Floor 6  
Chicago, IL 60605

Dear Ms. Zimmerman:

I received your letter of November 3, 2016, denying Individual Assistance (IA) to the Minnesotans whose lives were devastated by the severe storms, deluge rains, and flash floods of September 21-22. I am deeply disappointed by the decision.

Pursuant to 44 CFR § 206.46 (b), I appeal that denial and request you designate Individual Assistance for the counties of Blue Earth, Freeborn, Hennepin, Le Sueur, Rice, Steele, and Waseca counties.

In your denial letter, you stated the impact to individuals and households was not of the severity and magnitude to warrant the designation of Individual Assistance under FEMA-4290-DR. I strongly disagree with that assessment.

In my original request for a major disaster declaration, I wrote that I believed the estimated amount of Individual Assistance needs were understated by at least a third. Due to time constraints and the non-availability of homeowners – many who were away at work – a significant number of damaged structures were not inspected during the initial damage assessment. Hennepin County, where the city of Maple Grove received more than 8 inches of rain over a couple hours, was not assessed the first time. In order to provide additional information to justify this appeal, I directed our state emergency management agency to coordinate a joint FEMA/State/Local supplemental damage assessment of the impacted counties. As we prepared for the supplemental assessment, we utilized wide-ranging media to notify homeowners.

At the conclusion of the second assessment, the verified Individual Assistance needs rose from \$10,527,572 to \$14,455,459, an increase of 37 percent. The supplemental damage assessment identified an additional 353 homes with uninsured damage, including 2 destroyed structures and 91 more with major damage. Clearly, the need for assistance to individuals and households is great in these seven counties. Waseca County alone, with a population just over 19,000, accounts for an estimated \$9,295,445 in uninsured damage, which shows the high concentration of impacts on individuals and households caused by this disaster.

I cannot stress strongly enough the seriousness of the upcoming winter season. As I stated in my original request, most of the damaged homes had floodwaters in the basement, which damaged or destroyed mechanical systems – most critically, furnaces. The winter heating season has arrived. Historically, the average daily low temperature in southern Minnesota falls below freezing in November. Daily low temperatures will average around 7 degrees Fahrenheit from December through February. We will have snow cover from December through March, with average daily high temperatures staying below freezing. Last January, the coldest morning in Waseca County was -20 degrees Fahrenheit. The first blizzard of the season is forecast to hit our state later this week. Winter in Minnesota is a long, cold season and it is especially unforgiving to the vulnerable.

Without assistance, many of the 1,501 homes with verified uninsured damages will not be properly heated this winter and are, therefore, uninhabitable. Local officials are considering public warming shelters, which would be unprecedented long-term emergency measure. Homeowners are switching on damaged furnaces that have not been properly cleaned, repaired, or replaced. As predicted, desperate homeowners have turned to inappropriate and dangerous alternate heat sources, dramatically increasing the risk of house fires and carbon monoxide poisoning. Electricity consumption in the city of Waseca is already up 16% over last year and the increase is attributed to overreliance on space

heaters. Local fire departments are investigating at least two house fires they suspect were caused by alternate heating.

Local law enforcement, public health, and human services organizations throughout the region have stepped up household wellness checks and are finding many instances of people, particularly the elderly, living in unsafe and impoverished conditions. In Waseca County, a 92-year old woman had to cash in the certificate of deposit she was saving for her funeral expenses to shore up the foundation of her house. Sadly, she doesn't have any money left for the additional repairs needed and does not know what to do. Educators see a continuing rise in student stress over their living conditions and local faith communities report heightened anxiety among their members

The need for assistance to individuals and households for this disaster is simply beyond our capability. We do not have the organizational structure, staff, or programs to adequately care for these flood victims under the time pressures of the imminent winter season. We cannot help these citizens as quickly or as effectively as the federal government can.

I ask that you carefully review the additional information provided in the attachments and designate Individual Assistance for these seven counties under FEMA-4290-DR to relieve, and prevent, suffering for the Minnesotans cruelly impacted by this disaster.

Please contact Mr. Joe Kelly, the State Coordinating Officer, at 651-201-7404, if you need additional information or clarification.. Thank you for reconsidering my request.

Sincerely,



Mark Dayton  
Governor

cc: Commissioner Mona Doman, Minnesota Department of Public Safety  
Director Joe Kelly, Minnesota Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management

Attached:

Supplemental Individuals and Household Program (IHP) Cost Estimates  
Supplemental Date for Other Federal Agency Programs