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United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
WASHINGTON, DC 20510–6025
http://appropriations.senate.gov

June 2, 2009

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Vice Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye and Vice Chairman Cochran:

As the Committee continues conference deliberations on H.R. 2346, the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009, I am hopeful that a provision could be included that would waive the Federal Emergency Management Agency's state-local match requirement for debris removal and lowering the twenty-five percent state-local match to ten percent for infrastructure repair for the May 3, 2009, federally declared disaster in West Virginia.

The severe storms that hit southern West Virginia on May 3, 2009, resulted in flooding, mudslides, and landslides, which devastated communities in Mingo, Wyoming, McDowell, Raleigh, Mercer, Calhoun, Gilmer, Lewis, Roane, Upshur, and Wirt Counties. President Obama declared a major disaster declaration for the West Virginia on May 15, 2009, and later added additional counties under this designation as late as today.

The region's topography, with narrow valleys bordered by tributaries and steep hillsides, forces people to live by creeks and streams. I understand that mountain run-off contributed substantially to this most recent disaster, flooding areas that are not normally prone to such destruction. This unique set of circumstances caused insurmountable damage to homes, private bridges, roads and other infrastructure, in an area of the state that already leads the nation in economic disparity with high unemployment, high disability, and high poverty rates. This most recent flooding added yet another thick layer of difficulty for people already experiencing hard times.

Please know that I would be appreciative of any assistance that could be granted to the State of West Virginia to ease the burden on the state and the towns and cities that have been impacted by this recent flooding event.

I certify that neither I nor my immediate family has a pecuniary interest, consistent with the requirements of Paragraph 9 of Rule XLIV of the Standing Rules of the Senate, in any congressionally directed spending item that I have requested from the Committee on Appropriations in H.R. 2346, the Supplemental Appropriations Act, 2009.

With warm regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Robert C. Byrd

RCB:smb