

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 22, 2024

The Honorable Thomas Vilsack
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to urge the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to approve Governor Phil Scott's request for a Secretarial Disaster Designation for the State of Vermont, including for Orange, Washington, Caledonia, Orleans, Essex, Lamoille, Chittenden, and Addison counties. We stand ready to provide further support, as requested, to communities in our state affected by this month's severe flooding.

On July 10, 2024—just one year after the most catastrophic flooding Vermont has seen in nearly a century—our state was struck by remnants of Hurricane Beryl, causing severe flooding across northern and central Vermont. More than five inches of rain fell in numerous towns, with the town of Walden receiving 7.25 inches of precipitation. This intense rainfall over a short period of time damaged railways, destroyed crops, and washed away roads, bridges, and culverts. It also damaged—and, in some cases, completely destroyed—homes, farms, and businesses, particularly in Plainfield and Lyndon. Some of these homes had suffered serious damage in July 2023. 118 people had to be rescued from homes and vehicles by swift water teams, and sadly, two Vermonters lost their lives.

Vermont's farms—still in the process of recovering from last year's floods—were also heavily impacted, and it is imperative that the federal government, working in conjunction with the state, mobilize as many resources as possible to aid our agricultural sector. We therefore ask that you quickly approve Governor Scott's request for a Secretarial Disaster Designation and any additional requests for support forthcoming from the state.

We are grateful for all the support USDA has already provided and would like to reiterate how critical that is to mitigating the impact of this natural disaster on Vermont farms and communities. Together we can help Vermont's farmers successfully respond to this disaster and facilitate their path to recovery.

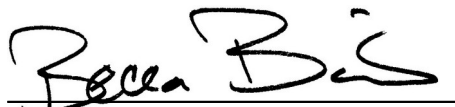
Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Becca Balint
Member of Congress