



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

RICK PERRY
GOVERNOR

October 12, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. Tony Russell, Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Region VI
Federal Regional Center
Denton, Texas 76209

Dear Mr. President:

In accordance with 44 CFR §206.46, I am appealing the October 8, 2010, denial for individual and public assistance requests following Tropical Storm Hermine. This disaster affected the state September 6-10, directly affecting the Central Texas corridor in the counties of Bell, Blanco, Cameron, Coryell, Denton, Hill, Jim Wells, Johnson, Medina, Tarrant, Travis, Willacy and Williamson.

In regard to my appeal for individual assistance, many of the affected counties are rural communities with limited industries, and nearly a quarter of these counties were also federally declared under the Hurricane Alex declaration. According to 2008 poverty and median income estimates by the U.S. Census Bureau, in three of the declared counties, more than 20 percent of people live at or below the poverty level, which will necessitate the need for individual assistance and case management resources that will surpass the capacity of local and state agencies to facilitate recovery. To further illustrate the need for assistance, more than 40 percent of residents under the age of 18 are living in poverty in Willacy and Cameron Counties, according to the same source.

Of the damaged homes covered by flood insurance, many families neglected to purchase contents insurance. Unfortunately, this was very common, as the homeowners did not realize the insurance was only for the structure. Insurance companies only required structural flood

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insurance. These families would benefit tremendously from the Other Needs Assistance program if they meet the income criteria.

Since the initial request, additional damage has also been reported in Bell, Johnson, Tarrant and Williamson Counties. In Williamson County alone, there were an additional 30 homes reported with major damage or as destroyed, along with 135 homes being reported as affected to minor damages. Tarrant County had an additional five homes with major damage. These damages were previously forwarded to FEMA Region VI for review.

Recently, Texas was declared for Hurricane Alex with verified damages of 304 major or destroyed homes in the three hardest-hit counties (Hidalgo, Starr and Webb). In regard to the Tropical Storm Hermine event, there were verified damages of 388 major or destroyed homes in the three hardest-hit counties (Bell, Tarrant and Williamson), in addition to the unverified damages listed above. There does not appear to be consistency with FEMA in approval or denial for both events. In addition, three of the most affected cities in Bell County (Killeen, Harker Heights and Nolanville) are considered military towns and have limited recovery resources, with much of the population deployed overseas. Only last year, Killeen suffered loss of life from the sniper on base and is still recovering from that event. Federal assistance would be imperative for these counties.

The 44 CFR §206.48 (5) states, "We look at the disaster history within the last 12-month period to evaluate better the overall impact on the state or locality. We consider declarations under the Stafford Act as well as declarations by the governor and the extent to which the state has spent its own funds." Texas has experienced an unprecedented number of both declared and undeclared disasters and emergencies in the past 27 months. Since Hurricanes Dolly and Ike (the largest disaster in Texas history) in 2008, the state has suffered 17 severe weather and flooding events that affected 63 counties and for which FEMA assistance was not requested. FEMA assistance was requested in an additional two events that were denied, appealed and denied again. The state still has the Temporary Housing Unit (THU) program open from Hurricane Ike. The THU program is not scheduled to be concluded until next year.

The aforementioned events do not include the Hurricane Alex declaration, affecting 21 counties, received earlier this year. The state is still actively assisting survivors with recovery programs for this event. The registration period for this declared disaster only ended on October 4, 2010. These additional incidents have seriously depleted the already-drained resources of state agencies, volunteer agencies and local retail organizations that assist with disaster recovery.

Additionally, Texas has been heavily affected by disasters during the past year, which has seriously affected the state budget and its ability to effectively respond to future events without

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federal assistance. Texas is in ongoing response to Hurricane Alex, which has caused more than \$42 million in infrastructure damage. A presidential disaster declaration (FEMA-1931-DR) was issued for that storm.

As you will see in the enclosure, in addition to my appeal for individual assistance, public assistance damage assessments were recently completed, and the estimated need is over \$13 million and rising. This is a substantial increase of more than \$10 million, which was not included in the previous Preliminary Damage Assessment submitted on September 20, 2010. These new figures reflect a substantial increase of more than 75 percent in costs associated with the response and infrastructure damage since the initial request. This has a tremendous impact across the state and in small communities with limited budgets.

The frequency of disasters within the last two years has reduced the operating budgets of state agencies to the point that response capabilities of the state have been greatly diminished. The denial for federal assistance to these already burdened counties seems to be sending the wrong message from the federal government in the effort to provide assistance.

The 44 CFR §206.46 states that "we evaluate the impact of the disaster at the county and local government level, as well as impacts at the American Indian and Alaskan Native Tribal government levels, because at times there are extraordinary concentrations of damages that might warrant federal assistance even if the statewide per capita is not met." After considering the damaged areas and listening to the concerns of local officials, it is my opinion that an extraordinary concentration of damages exists in these counties.

Your favorable consideration of this appeal would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Perry". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Rick Perry
Governor

RP:jhp

Enclosure

SUPPLEMENTAL ENCLOSURE TO A MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Requirements for Public Assistance

Stafford Act

CATEGORY

County	Cat. A	Cat. B	Cat. C	Cat. D	Cat. E	Cat. F	Cat. G	Totals
Bell	\$194,300.00	\$27,200.00	\$657,257.00	\$350,000.00	\$28,534.70	\$15,000.00	\$179,965.00	\$1,452,256.70
Blanco	\$2,400.00		\$6,061.00			\$92,000.00		\$100,461.00
Cameron	\$8,000.00	\$3,000.00			\$165,000.00			\$176,000.00
Coryell	\$18,000.00	\$4,904.00	\$137,750.00					\$160,654.00
Denton		\$124,200.00	\$853,305.00		\$3,200.00	\$138,000.00	\$22,000.00	\$1,140,705.00
Hill			\$669,600.00		\$78,091.00			\$747,691.00
Jim Wells	\$94,956.00	\$1,746.00			\$11,350.00	\$23,305.00		\$131,357.00
Johnson	\$1,560.00		\$958,896.80					\$960,456.80
Medina	\$15,000.00		\$12,000.00		\$209,500.00			\$236,500.00
Tarrant	\$125,000.00	\$5,644.85	\$267,257.00		\$87,195.00	\$126,800.00	\$576,601.00	\$1,188,497.85
Travis	\$25,856.00	\$83,762.00	\$149,937.00	\$27,760.00	\$52,500.00	\$487,423.00	\$170,934.00	\$998,172.00
Willacy	\$32,000.00	\$2,000.00			\$500.00			\$34,500.00
Williamson	\$72,489.00	\$12,235.00	\$2,206,413.00	\$53,000.00	\$203,414.00	\$1,067,000.00	\$1,482,586.00	\$5,097,137.00
								\$0.00
State Agencies		\$782,455.00						\$797,000.00
								\$0.00
Grand Total	\$589,561.00	\$1,061,691.85	\$5,918,476.80	\$430,760.00	\$839,284.70	\$1,949,528.00	\$2,432,086.00	\$13,221,388.35

Note: Estimates are to reflect total eligible costs before any cost sharing.