

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 18, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

On behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, we write to express our support for Governor Robert F. McDonnell's request for a declaration of a major disaster for the counties of Prince William and Fairfax, as well as statewide hazard mitigation, stemming from the extensive damage caused by severe weather from the remnants of Tropical Storm Lee between Sept. 8 and 9, 2011.

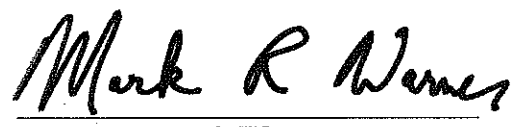
This severe weather emergency, which began the evening of Sept. 8 and continued through the morning of Sept. 9, produced record rainfall throughout the Commonwealth, particularly in Northern Virginia, where the ground already was saturated from rainfall caused just days earlier by Hurricane Irene. Areas of the Virginia coastline along the Interstate 95 corridor received 8 to 15 inches of rain. Fort Belvoir and the surrounding communities, for example, received 7.03 inches of rain in a three-hour period, which was characterized by the National Weather Service as a 1,000-year rainfall occurrence.

Damage caused by the excessive rainfall and flooding tragically caused five deaths, widespread power outages, and numerous road and transit closures, including the Capital Beltway (Interstate 495) and the Virginia Railway Express. A Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment was conducted shortly after this event. In Prince William County, two mobile home communities and a condominium complex sustained significant damage, displacing hundreds of residents, primarily of low-income means, and damaging numerous vehicles. The flooding at the Holly Acres mobile home park, for example, was so extensive that it created hazardous materials and public health concerns for first responders. Dozens of homes in Fairfax County were similarly affected. In addition, several small businesses in both counties were identified as having major damage.

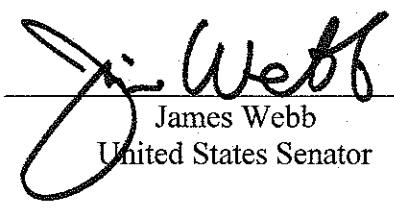
We commend the Commonwealth and the affected localities for their coordinated response to these prolonged weather emergencies, which tested both state and local response and resources. The severity and magnitude of the string of weather emergencies that buffeted Virginia and other states across the Southeast during this short period of time in early September clearly overwhelmed our state and local partners and merit supplemental federal assistance. Given these circumstances, the Governor is requesting a declaration of major disaster not only for Prince William and Fairfax counties but also for hazard mitigation throughout the Commonwealth.

Pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, we respectfully request that you grant Governor McDonnell's request for individual assistance to include disaster unemployment insurance, legal services and crisis counseling for the counties of Prince William and Fairfax, as well as hazard mitigation for the entire Commonwealth. Thank you for your expeditious consideration of this request.

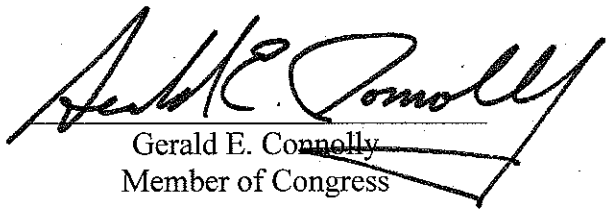
Sincerely,



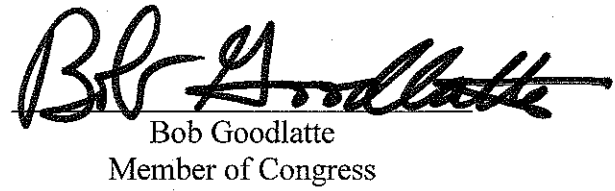
Mark Warner
United States Senator



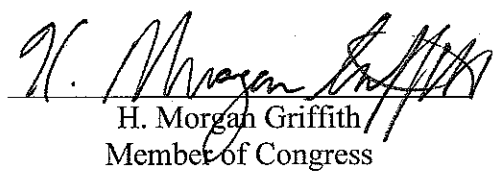
James Webb
United States Senator



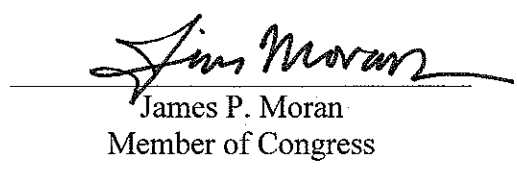
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



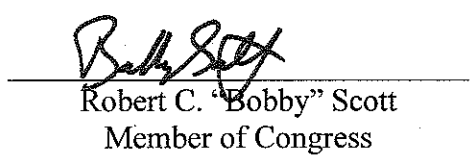
Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress



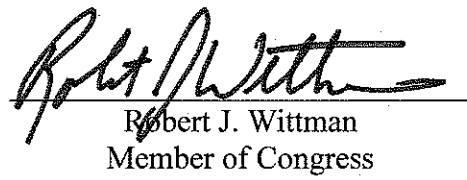
H. Morgan Griffith
Member of Congress



James P. Moran
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress