Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 5, 2013

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

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to express our strong support for Governor Mike Pence's request for a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of Indiana following the devastating tornadoes and severe storms that hit Indiana on November 17, 2013.

This period of disastrous weather caused extensive damage to public and private property throughout Indiana. A total of 28 tornadoes touched down in Indiana on November 17, the third highest number of tornadoes in a single day in Indiana. In the aftermath of these storms, Governor Mike Pence requested a joint federal, state, and local damage assessment of Howard County, including the City of Kokomo, where the greatest Individual Assistance damage occurred. The Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment verified the damage in Howard County, and noted that the affected area contained 45 percent low income residents.

Furthermore, the State of Indiana and this area have been subject to several other disasters since 2012 that have depleted the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF). In particular, on April 17, 2013, heavy rains caused the citizens of Howard County to experience a record flood on Wildcat Creek, leading the state to request a U.S. Small Business Administration Disaster Loan program and to activate the SDRF. As a result of this and other disasters, the current SDRF balance is $348,000.

After surveying the damage and consulting with state and local government officials, it is clear the recovery is beyond the capabilities and resources of the State of Indiana. The Governor is therefore requesting federal assistance for Howard County. The Governor is also requesting Hazard Mitigation statewide, and may also make additional requests for other counties in the state. Hoosiers have a proud and resilient history of triumphing over tragedy and persevering past precarious circumstances. However, the damage from the current disaster demands further federal assistance.

Congress plays a critical role in budgeting and appropriating funds for federal disaster relief, and we believe the damage sustained on November 17 is exactly the sort of event that should be considered for federal disaster assistance. Together, we firmly believe the next step on the long road to recovery is the issuance of a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration. We hope careful consideration will be given to Governor Pence's request, and believe timely federal assistance will significantly assist Indiana's recovery efforts.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Dan Coats
United States Senator

Joe Donnelly
United States Senator

Todd Rokita
Member of Congress

Susan Brooks
Member of Congress

Todd Young
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Jackie Walorski
Member of Congress

Larry Bucshon
Member of Congress

Luke Messer
Member of Congress

Peter Visclosky
Member of Congress

Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress