

New Mexico- Today, President Obama announced that a major federal disaster was declared in areas of New Mexico devastated by two weeks of monsoons. The violent storms caused critical infrastructural and property damage in McKinley, Cibola, Socorro, Mora, and San Juan Counties. The destruction caused by the heavy rain, hail and flooding was assessed on federal, state, and local levels. These surveys identified immense damage to roads, bridges, buildings, water control facilities, and drainage canals.

"The severe monsoons that hit Cibola County and the Pueblo of Laguna caused extensive destruction and despair for many New Mexican families. After touring these impacted communities and seeing the damage firsthand, I believe it is crucial that we provide the communities that were affected with immediate and long-term assistance, and that we work to fix the structural damage that has been done as quickly as possible. I am pleased that the President responded to our letter and that assistance is on the way to help support these counties," said Harry Teague.

"My heartfelt condolences go out to the New Mexicans impacted by this terrible flood, and I am pleased by the Administration's responsiveness to the state's request for assistance from FEMA," Ben Ray Luján said. "As I toured Farmington and the flooded region, I was struck by the devastation--but I was also struck by the efforts to rebuild the damaged infrastructure and the commitment to moving forward. I will continue to fight for the residents of the Third District and offer my support in obtaining further assistance."

U.S. Representatives Teague and Luján had urged the President to authorize federal emergency assistance.

"Having personally surveyed the affected regions, we can attest to the crippling effects of these historic monsoons," Teague and Luján wrote in a letter to the President. "The affected region is largely rural and includes many isolated and disadvantaged communities with pressing infrastructure needs and little property insurance. The destruction wrought by these floods jeopardizes the efforts of these communities to overcome the uncertainty of the current economic climate and to ensure the health and safety of their residents."

President Obama has authorized the release of Federal funds to help communities recover from the severe storms. Funds will be allocated through Hazard Mitigation Grant Programs, which will provide assistance to State and local governments as well as some private non-profit organizations that work to prevent long-term risk to life and property resulting from natural hazards. The funds also provide public assistance to organizations that will repair and replace damaged facilities and infrastructure.

