

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-4804

ENERGY AND NATURAL
RESOURCES COMMITTEE
ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON AGING

July 18, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20502

Dear Mr. President:

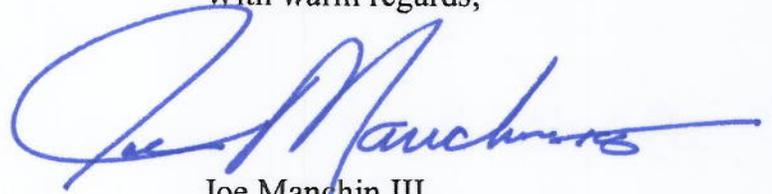
I write to you today in support of Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's request for a declaration of major disaster for the State of West Virginia as a result of straight-line winds and severe storms, including wind-driven rain, hail and lightning beginning June 29, 2012, and ending July 10, 2012.

Within four hours, the June 29th storm crossed the entire State from west to east, causing severe damage in all fifty-five counties. The straight-line, hurricane-force winds that traversed West Virginia on June 29th resulted in unprecedented damage to my state's electrical and telecommunications infrastructure. Nearly 680,000 out of 1,000,000 customers were without electricity, and suffered for days in scorching temperatures of nearly 100 degrees.

As a consequence of the June 29th storm, businesses, health care facilities, 9-1-1 centers, water and sewer systems, and multiple cell towers were rendered inoperative. With additional severe weather ensuing in the days immediately following the initial storm, local emergency supplies and first responders now find themselves stretched to the limit. Community resources are severely depleted and officials are faced with the daunting task of rebuilding local infrastructure.

The residents of my state were hit with a ferocious storm followed by days, and in some cases weeks, without electricity. With cell phone towers and power lines down, I am proud to say that, yet again, West Virginians pulled together in the face of adversity. To access federal disaster aid, Governor Earl Ray Tomblin made a request for a declaration of major disaster for the State of West Virginia, submitted on July 17, 2012, under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5208 (Stafford Act). I urge you to give every appropriate consideration to Governor Earl Ray Tomblin's request, and extend much-needed assistance to the communities in West Virginia that are struggling to re-build.

With warm regards,



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator

cc: Ms. MaryAnn Tierney
Regional Administrator
FEMA, Region III