

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing in support of Governor David Ige's request for reconsideration of the State of Hawai'i's appeal of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) denial of Individual Assistance for individuals and households impacted by Hurricane Lane (DR-4395). We are grateful for your support of Hawai'i during the severe weather, tropical cyclones, and volcanic eruptions that our state has suffered this year, and hope that you will give full consideration to Governor Ige's request.

Over the past five months, all four of Hawai'i's counties have been the subject of two emergency declarations and at least one major disaster declaration: Severe flooding (April, DR-4365), the eruption of Kilauea (May-August, DR-4366), and Tropical Storm Olivia (September, EM-3404). These disasters left homes, businesses, public infrastructure, agricultural lands, visitor attractions, and more either damaged, destroyed, or inaccessible. The destruction disrupted thousands of lives in some of our most vulnerable communities and will have a long-lasting effect on Hawai'i's economy, likely resulting in hundreds of millions of dollars lost, especially from our visitor and agricultural industries. When Hurricane Lane struck in late September, substantial resources had already been expended and our communities and first responders exhausted from dealing with prior disasters and ongoing recovery.

FEMA's current regulations provide the flexibility for you to consider the unusual circumstances Hawai'i faces and make a favorable determination for access to Individual Assistance in the recovery from Hurricane Lane (44 CFR 206.48). Moreover, the Disaster Recovery Reform Act,

which you signed into law on October 5, 2018, explicitly recognizes the discretion implicit to prior law:

In making recommendations to the President regarding a major disaster declaration, the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency shall give greater consideration to severe local impact or recent multiple disasters.

Further, the Administrator shall make corresponding adjustments to the Agency's policies and regulations regarding such consideration. Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, the Administrator shall report to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs of the Senate on the changes made to regulations and policies and the number of declarations that have been declared based on the new criteria. (P.L. 115-554, Section 1232, emphasis added).

Congress has recognized that rigid guidelines cannot account for the unique circumstances that states and localities will face, and we urge your compassionate consideration of the totality of Hawai'i's circumstances.

Finally, we express our sympathy and support for the devastation from Hurricanes Florence and Michael. We support ensuring quick, robust support for those communities in their time of need, while at the same time, urge you to remember the many communities in Hawai'i and elsewhere that are still recovering from past disasters. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that the appropriate level of resources to fund both immediate response and longer-term recovery are available to you and your Administration.

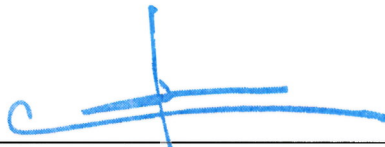
Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator



MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator



COLLEEN HANABUSA
Member of Congress



TULSI GABBARD
Member of Congress