

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

June 16, 2022

The Honorable Joseph Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write in strong support of Governor Kristi Noem’s request for a major disaster declaration for the state of South Dakota as a result of severe storms, straight-line winds, tornadoes, and flooding that occurred on May 12, 2022.

As Governor Noem’s request indicates, eastern South Dakota was struck by a string of destructive storms on May 12, 2022, with 14 reported tornadoes and wind gusts of more than 100 miles per hour in some areas. Widespread impacts resulted from this storm system, including uprooted or snapped trees, significant property damage, downed power-lines, overturned semi-trucks, as well as injuries and two tragic fatalities. The high winds and ensuing weather also caused extensive damage to agriculture—the lifeblood and economic engine of South Dakota. Fortunately, it was too early in the season to wipe out any crops, but farmers lost essential equipment and resources—feed, grain bins, outbuildings, and more.

The state, county, and local governments stepped up to meet the disaster with all available resources and authorities. However, the impact to public infrastructure across the 20 counties and two Indian reservations is severe. As Governor Noem indicated in her request, this event was of “such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments, and supplemental federal assistance is necessary.” This determination was reached on the basis of a preliminary damage assessment completed by the state in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

We respectfully request that you expeditiously review Governor Noem’s request and declare a major disaster for relevant areas of our state. Along with our fellow South Dakotans, we appreciate your consideration of this request and stand ready to assist in any way possible.

Sincerely,



JOHN THUNE
United States Senator



M. MICHAEL ROUNDS
United States Senator



DUSTY JOHNSON
Member of Congress