

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

October 31, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Mr. President:

We write to request that you authorize an adjustment to the federal cost-share requirement for response costs associated with Hurricane Sandy for the State of New Jersey. The extraordinary scope of this disaster warrants an immediate increase in the federal portion of the cost-share from the typical 75 percent to 90 to 100 percent.

We thank you for granting a major disaster declaration for many counties in our state that have been devastated by Hurricane Sandy. More than 2.4 million people lost power as a result of the storm—and many of them are still in the dark—and public infrastructure including roadways, rail lines, utility lines, government facilities, water treatment plants, and our shoreline were severely devastated. This massive damage to local communities comes just as local governments were rebuilding following the costly damage caused by Hurricane Irene.

Recent storms in New Jersey have already placed a significant burden on our state and local governments, which have been forced to pay for disaster response and will need federal assistance for recovery from Hurricane Sandy. Under the “Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act,” you have the authority to adjust cost-shares for aid to states and local governments for disaster response. While we understand the federal share is typically 75 percent of these total costs, the unprecedented and extraordinary extent of damage Hurricane Sandy has caused to our state merits an adjustment to this cost-share to 90 to 100 percent federal coverage.

There is significant precedent for an adjustment to the federal cost-share requirement. Since 1986, more than 200 adjustments to the federal cost-share have been authorized, including during Hurricanes Ike, Gustav, Wilma, Katrina, and Rita.

We respectfully urge you to expeditiously grant an adjustment to the federal cost-share requirement for assistance to state and local governments for disaster response efforts. Thank you for your consideration of this important request, and we thank you for the strong support you and your entire Administration have provided to our state during this difficult time.

Sincerely,


FRANK R. LAUTENBERG


ROBERT MENENDEZ

Cc: Administrator Craig Fugate, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Secretary Janet Napolitano, Department of Homeland Security