

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

June 9, 2025

The Honorable Kelly Loeffler
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd St., SW
Washington, DC 20416

Administrator Loeffler:

We write to offer our full support of Governor Gretchen Whitmer's June 5, 2025, request for an administrative declaration of disaster through the Small Business Administration's (SBA) Rapid Disaster Declaration process, following the severe ice storm that struck Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula from March 28-30, 2025.

This devastating storm delivered record levels of freezing rain across a region spanning thirteen counties – Alcona, Alpena, Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Montmorency, Oscoda, Otsego, Presque Isle, Kalkaska, and Mackinac – and one federally recognized tribe – the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians. The resulting damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure left tens of thousands of residents without power and entire communities cut off – disrupting local economies and compounding existing financial hardship throughout the impacted area.

The economic fallout from the storm has been staggering. In Emmet County – the second-most populous county in Northern Michigan – a local business survey conducted in the storm's aftermath found that 97 percent of businesses experienced disruption, with 86 percent forced to suspend operations, and 71 percent reporting employees unable to report to work. More than half of these businesses reported infrastructure damage, inventory loss, or supply chain disruptions. Small businesses throughout the region, many of which are already operating on thin margins, are now struggling to recover. While state resources have already been mobilized to assist in this recovery effort, the hardships faced by businesses exceed the State of Michigan's capacity to address them alone.

Beyond the immediate financial toll, the downstream economic effects are sure to be profound. Tourism – a primary economic driver for communities across Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula – will suffer this summer due to the deforestation, trail and park closures, and damage to other outdoor recreation areas. Critical industries like maple syrup production and logging also face multi-year setbacks due to irreversible damage to over 3 million acres of forest.

We understand that SBA has worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Michigan Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, and county officials to conduct a damage assessment of the impacted areas – and that Cheboygan County has met SBA's threshold. As a result, SBA assistance could be extended not only to Cheboygan County, but also to the contiguous counties of Mackinac, Emmet, Charlevoix, Otsego, Montmorency, and Presque Isle, as well as the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians.

Additionally, should Governor Whitmer's May 16, 2025, Major Disaster Declaration request be approved by President Trump, all counties included in that declaration would become eligible for SBA assistance – offering much needed support for the entirety of the impacted region.

The hardworking people and businesses of Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula are strong and resilient. Yet, local capacity is limited, and recovery of this magnitude requires a coordinated effort at all levels of government. As such, we respectfully request that SBA swiftly approve Governor Whitmer's request for an administrative declaration of disaster. This declaration would make available critical federal support and resources to struggling business owners as they continue working to stabilize operations, preserve jobs, and rebuild.

We appreciate SBA's continued support for disaster-affected regions, and we respectfully request your full and fair consideration of this request.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

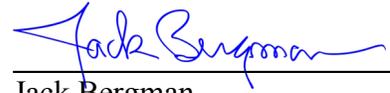
Sincerely,



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Elissa Slotkin
United States Senator



Jack Bergman
Member of Congress