

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 11, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

The Honorable Shailen Bhatt
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary and Administrator Bhatt:

We write to request that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provide and expedite support, funding, and other assistance to the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) in response to the ongoing winter storms that have severely damaged road and highway infrastructure across the state. California Governor Gavin Newsom's emergency declaration permits FHWA to assist in emergency management efforts, and we respectfully ask that you expedite this essential federal assistance.

These recent weather events, which include atmospheric rivers and a bomb cyclone system, have caused significant flooding, mudslides, erosion, sinkholes, and power outages. The storms have also required evacuations for thousands of Californians and led to road closures that have interrupted daily and essential travel. In some areas, people have lost their lives due to these storms. Due to the consecutive nature of these storms, California is experiencing heavily saturated soil, resulting in an increased vulnerability to flooding. With this extreme rainfall, communities have experienced widespread flooding especially along the coast, and at some watersheds. This series of weather events has already caused extensive damage to California state highways, and we expect additional reports of infrastructure damage in the coming weeks.

On January 4, 2023, Governor Newsom proclaimed a state of emergency throughout California to support the ongoing response to recent winter storms. That response includes Caltrans' request for immediate assistance through the FHWA Emergency Relief Program to support highway repairs and local response and recovery efforts, which Congress authorized in Title 23, United States Code, Section 125. The Emergency Relief Program allows for funds to be dispersed from the Highway Trust Fund for the repair or reconstruction of Federal-aid highways and roads on Federal lands which have suffered serious damage as a result of natural disasters.

The intensity of these storms requires additional assistance, coordination, and federal support. Therefore, we urge you to expedite FHWA support, funding, and other resources in response to these ongoing winter storms. We encourage full cooperation across agencies and municipalities to ensure that Californians can continue withstand and recover from this storm.

Thank you for your attention to the winter storms thus far, and we look forward to continuing to coordinate emergency and disaster response efforts with the Department of Transportation and FHWA.

Sincerely,



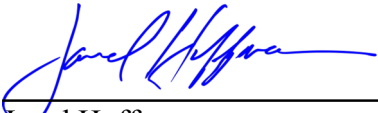
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



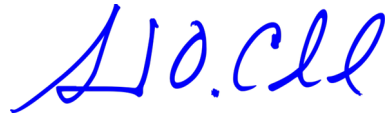
Alex Padilla
United States Senator



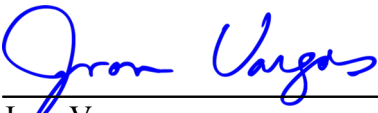
Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



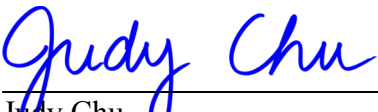
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



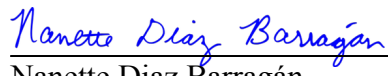
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
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Judy Chu
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Julia Brownley
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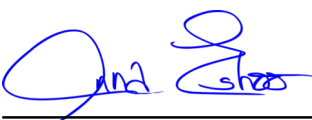
Ro Khanna
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Zoe Lofgren
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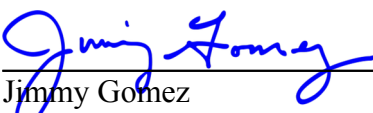
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



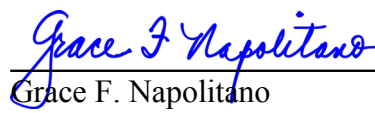
Anna G. Eshoo
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Doris Matsui
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Grace F. Napolitano
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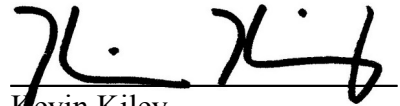
Pete Aguilar
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Tom McClintock
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Brad Sherman
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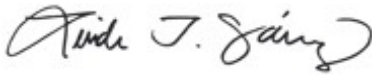
Kevin Kiley
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Tony Cárdenas
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