

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

July 26, 2024

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 support of Gov. Kristi Noem's (R-S.D.) request for a major disaster declaration for the state of South Dakota as a result of severe storms and flooding that occurred June 16 through July 8, 2024.

As Gov. Noem's request indicates, the catastrophic flooding began on June 16, 2024, resulting from a succession of heavy rainstorms that filled the creeks and rivers that coincide in the southeast corner of the state. The excess water flooded the Niobrara River, the Missouri River, and the Big Sioux River, causing an emergency evacuation of the affected areas before sink holes emerged, houses washed away, and the BNSF Railway railroad bridge connecting North Sioux City, S.D., with Sioux City, Iowa, collapsed into the Big Sioux River. The flooding caused significant damage to public infrastructure, homes, and businesses, and has disrupted the lives of the nearly six thousand residents that live in the North Sioux City and Dakota Dunes areas.

Data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration shows that the Big Sioux River crested at 44.98 feet, surpassing the previous 2014 record by 7.28 feet. Analysis from the National Weather Service shows the rain event that created this year's flooding was a 1,000-year event. Eleven river gauges were at record-high levels. This disaster has impacted 25 counties and five tribal nations and caused tens of millions of dollars in damage to public infrastructure, homes, and businesses.

In light of these considerations, we respectfully request that you expeditiously review Gov. 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