

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 3, 2026

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

Dear President Trump:

We write to demand you immediately reverse the July 2, 2026 denial of the State of Rhode Island's request for a major disaster declaration under the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for its historic February 2026 blizzard. After months of waiting, on the same day you approved major disaster declarations for several Republican-led states, you chose to leave Rhode Islanders out in the cold. It is unacceptable to politicize the disaster declaration process when Rhode Islanders' health, safety, and businesses were severely impacted by this historic storm.

Between February 22-23, 2026, Rhode Island was struck by a record-breaking blizzard that produced up to 37.9 inches of snow and up to 74-mile-per-hour winds. The storm hit the state with the intensity of a Category 2 hurricane, caused severe power outages for tens of thousands of Rhode Islanders, and tragically resulted in two fatalities and hundreds of emergency room visits. The storm created immense challenges for local businesses, which faced prolonged closures due to storm-related damage and disruptions to transportation, utilities, and public services.

The State of Rhode Island worked with FEMA to develop a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment, which was submitted with the state's request on April 7, 2026. The extensive review found over \$19 million in validated damages, an amount that greatly exceeds the threshold for a major disaster declaration. Given the impact this storm had on the local economy, public services, and infrastructure, you should immediately approve any appeal submitted by the State of Rhode Island to reverse the denial of its request. This will ensure that Rhode Island can access the funding it needs to fully recover from this historic storm.

Sincerely,



Jack Reed
United States Senator



Sheldon Whitehouse
United States Senator



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress