

**CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH**

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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

September 1, 2011

Lynn Canton  
FEMA Region II Director  
26 Federal Plaza 13th floor  
New York, NY 10278

Dear Ms. Canton:

I am deeply concerned and disappointed that several counties in my district that were severely impacted by flooding – catastrophic in some neighborhoods – from Hurricane Irene have not yet been included in the President’s disaster declaration.

It is my understanding that FEMA is currently continuing its assessment of damage in New Jersey and will be adding additional counties to the original list released August 31, 2011. As damage evaluation continues in New Jersey, I would like to bring to your attention the significant damage I viewed in my district, which includes large sections of Monmouth, Ocean, Mercer, and Burlington counties.

Of particular concern is a section of Howell Township in Monmouth County that was flooded on the weekend of the 20th and 21st and then again after Hurricane Irene moved through New Jersey the following weekend. I have made several visits to this neighborhood and the scene there is devastating. Especially impacted was Mariners Cove in the Moors Landing development, house numbers 70 to 100.

Over 30 homeowners in this community received flood damage and their homes are now uninhabitable and in many cases it is doubtful whether they can be livable ever again. Over the years, the flooding at Mariners Cove has been severe, repetitive and overwhelming. Your quick response in this neighborhood is essential.

There was also severe flooding in the Borough of Spring Lake where 20 to 25 blocks and 150 homes saw water several feet high gushing through their neighborhood. The homes near and adjacent to Wreck Pond have sustained extensive damage over the years while the local community, with FEMA and Army Corps assistance, has attempted to identify and fund critical mitigation measures to reduce the risk of sustained loss from disasters and other significant weather events. In addition to the property loss of homeowners, the 1.5 miles of Spring Lake’s boardwalk was decimated and washed away. Both issues cannot be adequately addressed without a proper disaster declaration and comprehensive FEMA assistance. Including Monmouth County in the declaration will help ensure that these severely impacted areas finally receive the comprehensive support needed to address the repetitive damage.

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Ocean County received significant flooding, especially in the Point Pleasant Inlet area and in Jackson Township where considerable road damage occurred.

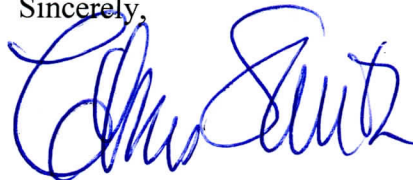
In Mercer County, the Borough of Hightstown was severely impacted with its Borough Hall, the Police Department, the Fire Department, and the Public Works Building all flooded. Hightstown's Water Treatment Plant was also destroyed in the flood and requires a complete rebuild. Fortunately, the borough has been able to obtain water from neighboring East Windsor Township.

New Jersey's Capitol City of Trenton also located in Mercer County was impacted with flooding along Route 29, elsewhere along the Assunpink Creek which flows through the city, and the area around the Trenton Train Station, which had damage on the lower track levels. Amtrak and New Jersey Transit Service rail service was halted for several days after the flooding. Especially devastating in Mercer was the severe damage I witnessed in the Cornell Heights section of Hamilton Township where several blocks of homes sustained several feet of water on their first floors. As with the Mariners Cove and Spring Lake neighborhoods, Cornell Heights is a community that has been subject to repeated weather events that need both immediate FEMA assistance and long-term mitigation support.

Considering the severe damage in my district, it is also my hope that FEMA can locate a Disaster Recovery Center in Howell Township, Monmouth County and another center in Mercer County. Community leaders in Howell have assured me that they will do whatever is necessary to accommodate the center.

My office, the aforementioned counties, and Howell Township can provide any additional supporting information that you may need regarding this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me or David Kush of my staff at 202-225-3765 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH  
Member of Congress