

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2405

June 12, 2019

COMMITTEE ON  
APPROPRIATIONS

COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,  
AND FORESTRY

COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND  
NATURAL RESOURCES

COMMITTEE ON  
RULES AND  
ADMINISTRATION

The Honorable Donald Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am writing to request emergency assistance in response to catastrophic flooding affecting the lives, property, and general wellbeing of thousands of Mississippians.

Contaminated floodwater trapped inside of Mississippi's intricate system of federally-constructed levees and floodgates has inundated roughly 860 square miles for more than four consecutive months. Persistent high water on the Mississippi River, excessive rainfall within the 4,093-square-mile drainage area, and the lack of a federally-authorized yet unconstructed pumping station to remove water has resulted in devastation across a large portion of the State. There is an immediate need to remove the trapped floodwaters, which can only be accomplished by pumping it from the protected side of the levee system.

As result of this flooding and other severe weather events, you approved on April 23, 2019, a major disaster declaration for the State of Mississippi under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act. The Stafford Act authorizes the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to direct other federal agencies, such as the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, to use available personnel, supplies, and other resources to provide assistance in the event of a major disaster declaration by the President. In addition, the Corps of Engineers has independent statutory authorities, such as section 5 of the Flood Control Act of 1941 (33 U.S.C. 701n), to provide direct assistance in the form of portable pumping stations to remove trapped, contaminated water sources. Following Hurricane Katrina, for example, the Corps of Engineers installed a number of temporary pumps to remove the floodwaters from New Orleans, and to remain in place until permanent pump stations could be constructed.

The Fiscal Year 2019 Supplemental Appropriations Act enacted on June 6, 2019, provides \$1.0 billion for the Corps of Engineers to carry out emergency response activities authorized under section 5 of the Flood Control Act of 1941. It also provides \$575 million for the Corps to address emergency activities within the Mississippi River and Tributaries (MR&T) project area, which the flooded area of Mississippi falls within.

Given the available resources and existing authorities under current law, I respectfully request that you direct FEMA, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and other federal agencies to take swift action to install temporary pumps in the Yazoo Backwater Area of Mississippi to remove floodwaters until a long-term solution is constructed.

I greatly appreciate your leadership in addressing the national disasters and emergencies that have beset the nation. I look forward to continuing to work with you and your Administration to help the people of Mississippi affected by the ongoing flood disaster in my state.

Sincerely,



CINDY HYDE-SMITH

United States Senator