

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 12, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We request your help to expedite all federal assistance possible to help the state of Hawai‘i recover from flooding and landslides in Kaua‘i County, Maui County, and the City and County of Honolulu—in particular, the major landslide that has blocked access to the communities of Hanalei Town, Wainiha, and Hā‘ena. The heavy rain that caused these incidents began on March 8th, and is anticipated to continue through March 13th, which means that further damage from flooding and landslides is possible. FEMA is already providing the fullest range of support allowed under law for COVID-19, but the catastrophic rains only compound the demands on the state and counties.

Hawai‘i needs help to re-connect communities in Hanalei, recover from the flooding and landslide damage, and prevent a resurgence of COVID-19 in communities in all three counties. The damage from these disastrous rains also complicate the continuing recovery from multiple disasters in 2018 (FEMA DR-4365, DR-4366, and DR-4395) because of the additional demands on remediation and re-building efforts ranging from lack of funding, to work crews, and to planning and recovery officials. Your leadership to combat climate change is particularly relevant here as the state and counties consider the best long-term recovery options, since severe weather and its impacts are likely to increase in the future. Programs like FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and Public Assistance Alternative Procedures are critical tools for creating resilience to reduce the impacts from the full range of future severe weather events.

The National Weather Service has reported 4-day preliminary totals for sites across the state that demonstrate how localized and extreme damage from the rains has been:

County	4-Day Range of Rainfall
Kaua‘i	11.37 – 25.25 inches
City and County of Honolulu	6.03 – 21.55 inches
Maui County	4.98 – 20.23 inches
Hawai‘i Island	10.18 – 19.36 inches

In addition to the Hanalei landslide, there are media reports of other landslides that have closed or partially closed important state roads that keep rural residents connected to their jobs, schools, supermarkets, friends, and family. Bridges and dams on the island of Maui have been severely compromised: Kaupakalua Bridge; Pe‘ahi Road Bridge; a portion of Awalau Road in Ha‘iku. O‘ahu has seen destructive flooding in Hale‘iwa and other locations. The continuing severe

weather has made it impossible for state and county officials to fully assess damages, but the need for federal assistance is already evident.

We are grateful for the prompt attention that the federal government has given Hawai'i for prior disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic, and we hope that you will continue to support our state's needs in response to these most recent landslides and flooding.

Sincerely,



BRIAN SCHATZ
United States Senator



MAZIE K. HIRONO
United States Senator



ED CASE
Member of Congress



KAIALI'I KAHELE
Member of Congress

cc: Mr. Bob Fenton, Senior Official Performing the Duties of FEMA Administrator