



STATE OF MARYLAND

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**Wes Moore**

**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION  
COVER LETTER  
MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION**

**June 11, 2025**

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Through:  
Acting Region III Administrator Lilian Hutchinson  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
615 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19106

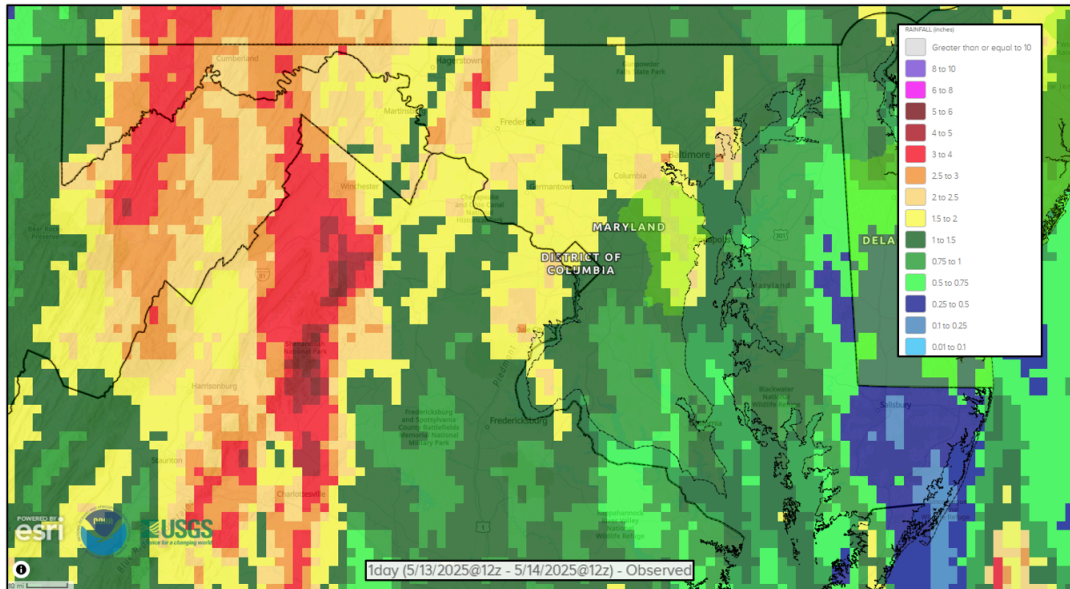
Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121–5207, and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I respectfully request a Major Disaster declaration for the State of Maryland due to widespread flash flooding that occurred in Western Maryland on May 13-14, 2025, severely impacting Allegany and Garrett counties.

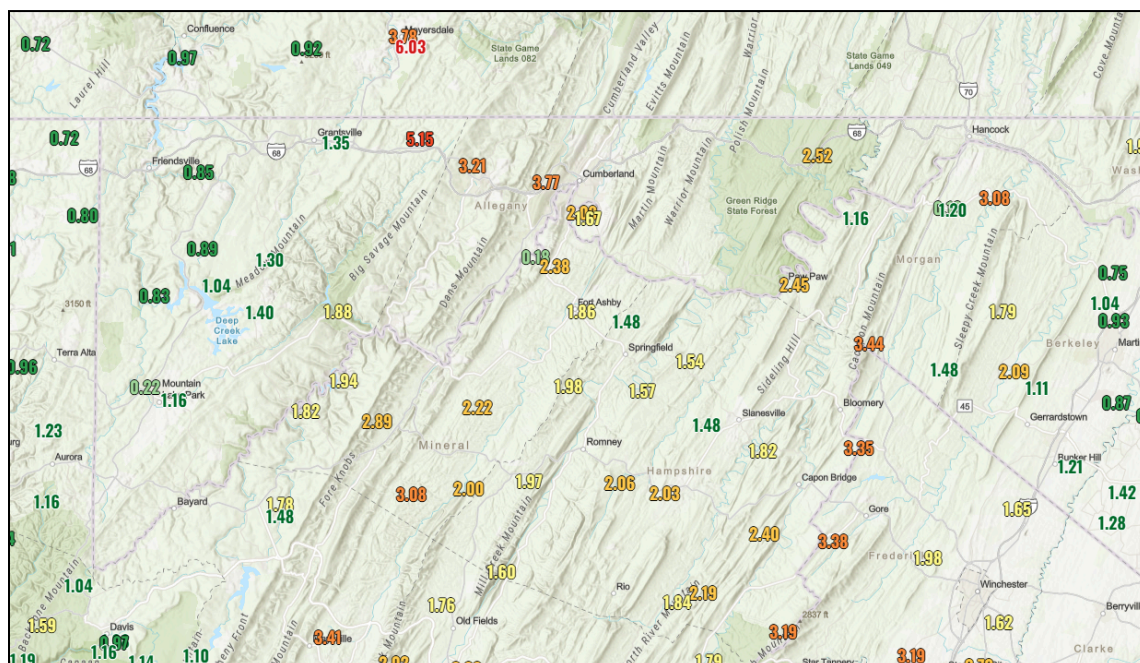
A low pressure system remained nearly stationary in the Ohio River Valley from May 12 through May 15, 2025, bringing multiple days of inclement weather to the Mid Atlantic states. The system pulled moisture in from the Atlantic Ocean which, when it encountered the Appalachian Mountains of Western Maryland, produced heavy rains and thunderstorms that resulted in stream flooding and flash flooding. In just over 24 hours between May 13 and May 14, areas in Western Maryland received over 6 inches of rain, with regionally widespread totals of 3-5 inches. These downpours over mountainous terrain caused streams to quickly flow out of their banks and into rural towns, especially in Garrett and Allegany counties. At 2:49 PM on May 13, the National Weather Service issued a Flash Flood Emergency for the towns of Westernport, Luke, and Barton due to widespread life-threatening flash flooding reported by local emergency management. Flash flooding prompted road closures, blocked transportation routes, local evacuations, swiftwater rescues, debris accumulation, water

treatment compromises, school closures, downstream flooding, and dam concerns, requiring the mobilization of municipal, county, and state response resources.

Georges Creek in Westernport, Maryland, rose to a near record 12.41 feet. The creek rose from action stage to major flood stage in four hours, and continued rising. The peak height was the second highest in its long history of record keeping, dating back to the early to mid 20th century, just behind the record set in 1996 by the remnants of Hurricane Fran. Georges Creek dropped out of flood stage by 4:00 AM on May 14.



Estimated rainfall amounts for May 13th-14th, based on radar observations.



The floodwaters breached retaining walls, carved new stream channels through neighborhoods, and forced evacuations in several communities. Over 200 students and teachers at Westernport Elementary were rescued by boat. Several other schools in the flood zone were either evacuated or temporarily locked down.

The region is now contending with critical infrastructure failures, including a major sewer main break in Allegany County. Permanent repairs to this damage will require bypass pumping, complete line replacement, and possible stream relocation, which is far beyond local and state capacity. The wastewater treatment plants in Westernport and Barton also sustained damages that necessitate costly repairs. Additionally, the drinking water system in Lonaconing is significantly damaged, and will require extensive repairs that are beyond the means of a small, rural town.

Miles of roads, numerous bridges, railroad beds, and public utilities have been extensively damaged or destroyed. The impacted counties and the State of Maryland have worked together to mobilize resources to repair this infrastructure and manage the impacts. However, the work required to fully restore this infrastructure is beyond the capacity of the state and local resources.

The flooding also damaged residential structures, displaced families, and strained local recovery resources. The impact on homes and neighborhoods has been severe, with at least 200 homes damaged. The economies of small towns in rural Appalachia are often precarious, and unable to absorb devastating impacts such as this, due to limited physical and financial resources. The state and non-governmental partners are working together to provide critical resources for the impacted residents; however, restoring the community and economy will require additional resources and stable infrastructure.

Additionally, the closures of the Westernport and Georges Creek Regional Libraries have removed two dependable public WiFi access points and eliminated key community anchors that offered educational programs, digital access, and a safe space for residents and students. The closure of these facilities forces community members to travel farther to access basic services, which is an unreasonable expectation in an area with limited transportation resources and high economic vulnerability.

Transportation challenges compound the crisis. The two most heavily affected census tracts include transportation barriers, with residents already facing high costs and long travel times due to geographic isolation. The flooding destroyed dozens of vehicles which is an insurmountable loss for many families where nearly one in five live below the poverty line. Compounding this, damage to roads and bridges has severed lifelines to schools, jobs, healthcare, and recovery services, with assessments and repairs likely to take months. For these semi-remote communities, mobility is not just a convenience; it is a necessity for survival, and that necessity has been severely compromised.

The public health landscape in the flood-affected areas was already fragile. With high rates of chronic illness like heart disease and diabetes, and a lower-than-average availability of health providers, Allegany County residents are at high risk in normal times, let alone during a disaster recovery period. Nursing homes and long-term care facilities along the Georges Creek corridor now face added delays in emergency response due to impassable roads. Emotional and physical stress from displacement and financial loss could intensify health vulnerabilities among the

region's aging and economically stressed populations. Additionally, homes and structures that are impacted may have mold infestation, which exacerbate health issues.

Economically, the community is not positioned to weather another flood disaster. More than \$11.5 million in property damage has been recorded from past flooding over the last 30 years, excluding costs related to public infrastructure and vehicles. The cumulative toll of repeat disasters leaves these communities with little to no capacity to recover on their own. Census data already places the region at elevated risk for unemployment, low educational attainment, and persistent poverty. The repeated disruption of key infrastructure, services, and livelihoods means that recovery without significant federal assistance will be delayed, if not impossible for many.

The May flooding is not a standalone event, it is part of a repeated cycle that continues to erode the resilience of Allegany County's communities. Without immediate and sustained federal support, the path to recovery will be steep, slow, and potentially out of reach.

The emergency operations plan was activated on May 13, 2025 by activating the State Emergency Operations Center that afternoon and deploying a liaison officer on-site the next morning to assist with county coordination. Water rescues were conducted by the Maryland State Police and the Natural Resources Police. The Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and the Maryland Department of Human Services provided staff to assist with donations management, voluntary agency coordination, and arrange for critical donations including mobile laundry facilities, mucking and clean-up services, and the tracking and movement of the large amount of donations being received. MDEM also deployed staff to assist the local jurisdictions with damage assessments. The Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration continues to conduct debris survey and removal operations, and emergency repairs to roads and bridges. The Maryland Department of the Environment has been involved with wastewater and drinking water system repairs and waterway debris removal. The Department of Juvenile Services provided resources such as mobile shower trailers in areas with water utility failure. MDEM continues to track and fulfill resource requests on a daily basis.

On June 10, the State of Maryland activated the State Disaster Recovery Fund and awarded Allegany County Government \$459,375 in financial assistance to support disaster survivors. This first-ever, state-led assistance will support recovery and relief efforts, to include replacement of destroyed major appliances for individuals and other vital services.

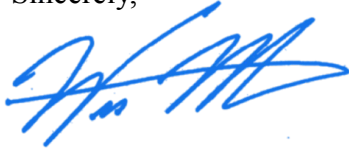
Despite these efforts, the scope and complexity of the damages exceed state and local capabilities. Accordingly, I respectfully request the following federal disaster assistance:

- Public Assistance (Categories A–G) for Allegany and Garrett counties
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for all jurisdictions in the State of Maryland

I have designated Russell Strickland, Secretary of the Maryland Department of Emergency Management, as the Governor's Authorized Representative, and Sara Bender as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. They will work in partnership with FEMA Region III to support field operations and recovery coordination.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this request and for your continued support of the State of Maryland and its citizens during this challenging time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Wes Moore', with a stylized, flowing script.

Wes Moore  
Governor of Maryland

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

B: Public Assistance

Additional Information (HMGP)