

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2026

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

Dear President Trump,

We write in strong support of the state of South Dakota's major disaster declaration request submitted by Governor Larry Rhoden on July 27, 2026. This disaster declaration request would assist in recovery efforts from severe weather that occurred June 28 to July 3, 2026.

From June 28 to July 3, 2026, a single severe weather system brought a series of devastating storms across central South Dakota. This multiday storm system included: a mini-derecho, windstorms, hail, straight line winds, tornadoes and flooding. The system also included peak wind gusts of 131 MPH, making it the strongest recorded thunderstorm wind gust since 1983 and among the strongest recorded in the United States.

This combination of severe weather impacted 21,786 households in eight counties and two tribal communities across nearly an 8,500 square mile area.

In the city of Highmore alone, 80-90% of all structures in the city sustained damage. It also caused significant damage to public infrastructure and led to widespread power outages. In some cases, residents were left without power for over a week while experiencing extremely hot summer temperatures.

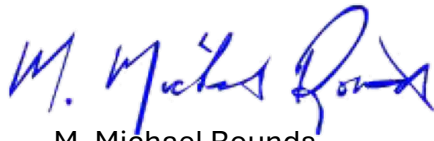
The damage to public utility infrastructure is also severe and far reaching. Across South Dakota, electric infrastructure has been repeatedly weakened by year-round extreme weather events including severe storms, ice accumulation, wildfire, high winds, and flooding.

We support the state's request and urge you to approve a major disaster declaration, as soon as possible so that the necessary federal resources are available to assist the relevant areas of our state. We also strongly urge you to approve the state's request for hazard mitigation funding. This will allow the state to mitigate future damages to vulnerable

electric infrastructure. Without this funding, preventable damage to utilities from future disasters will only compound existing repair challenges.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request, and please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any additional information.

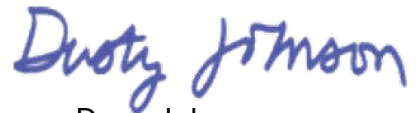
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. Michael Rounds".

M. Michael Rounds
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Thune".

John Thune
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dusty Johnson".

Dusty Johnson
Member of Congress