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ASSISTANT MINORITY WHIP

COMMITTEE ON
ENERGY AND COMMERCE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON
COMMUNICATIONS, TECHNOLOGY AND THE INTERNET

SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMERCE,
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3505

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The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

I am extremely disappointed to learn of the Federal Emergency Management Agency's decision to deny the federal major disaster declaration made by Governor Strickland for the counties of Wood, Fulton, and Ottawa that were affected by the recent tornados. Although the state has provided relief funds and other aid, I have grave concerns that it is not enough to assist these rural communities in the rebuilding process. Tragically, the storm claimed six lives and completely destroyed many families' homes and businesses.

For an area that is already struggling in this economic downturn, and has been extremely hard hit with high unemployment, the impact caused by these storms is overwhelming. I was on the ground on Sunday and Monday following the tornados, and again the following Friday. Many homeowners pointed out structural damage that in their and my opinion made their houses inhabitable. I believe that a second review is needed especially since debris might have obscured such faults during an earlier inspection. It is important that we provide funds for disasters that happen in the U.S., and particularly these counties in Ohio.

Please reconsider this decision, and assist these American communities in their time of need. If you have any questions or would like to speak with me personally regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 225-6405.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

REL/ahw

Cc: The Honorable Ted Strickland, Governor, State of Ohio
The Honorable W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, FEMA
Chani Wiggins, Asst. Secretary for Congressional Affairs, DHS