

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4315

April 29, 2025

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

Cameron Hamilton
Acting Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Dear President Trump and Acting Administrator Hamilton:

I write with grave urgency to request that you issue a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the Rio Grande Valley so that Individual Assistance (IA) funds may be released to assist the four counties affected by the late March 2025 floods that devastated our region.

As you may know, the Rio Grande Valley, a four-county region in South Texas, experienced widespread rains and floods between March 26-28, 2025. Communities across the Valley like Harlingen, Texas, for example received more than 20 inches of rain as well as the Arroyo Colorado watershed – intended to alleviate flooding in the area – which flooded and reach a stage of 21 feet. Many residents of the 34th Congressional District of Texas were forced to evacuate, abandon vehicles and property, and/or be rescued during and after the storms.

Due to the damage, on March 28, 2025, I wrote to Governor Greg Abbott urging him to issue a disaster declaration for South Texas so that the affected counties could receive assistance: Cameron, Hidalgo, Starr, and Willacy counties. As a result, on March 29, 2025, Governor Abbott issued a disaster declaration for the four affected counties. Over the last several weeks, members of the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM), Small Business Administration (SBA), and local governments coordinated a Damage Assessment of the area.

As of April 14, 2025, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) confirmed the following damages to homes: 842 affected, 2,618 minor, 1,911 major, and 235 destroyed. As time progresses and people recover, our communities will continue to confront the long-term damage that these floods left behind.

Moreover, I want to bring to your attention the letter Governor Greg Abbott sent to you on April 17, 2025, requesting a Presidential Disaster Declaration for South Texas communities impacted by the recent rainfall and flooding. In this letter the Governor highlighted the work that Texas state agencies provided the people of Rio Grande Valley, including conducting search and rescue

operations, providing animal welfare services, assessing infrastructure damage, and supporting water systems that were overwhelmed by the surge. Transportation was heavily disrupted during and after the storm, with flooded roads and the temporary closure of the Valley International Airport. Agencies and first responders were directed to assist, and successfully executed hundreds of water rescues as people were forced to abandon vehicles in search of safety.

It is imperative that you approve Governor Abbott's request for a federal emergency declaration following the March storms, as the need for our region is clear. These unexpected storms have left constituents in my congressional district and the surrounding areas worried. As a predominantly low-income area, storms like these have a long-term impact on the lives of people.

As Congressman for the 34th Congressional District of Texas, I urge you to head Governor Abbott's request to issue a Presidential Disaster Declaration for the Rio Grande Valley and the release Individual Assistance (IA) funds to allow affected communities to rebuild. South Texans need assistance and rely on their public officials to step up and help them.

I look forward to working together for the betterment of all South Texans.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vicente Gonzalez', enclosed within a thin black rectangular border.

Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress