

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

March 31, 2020

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

On behalf of the State of Arkansas, we are writing to support Governor Asa Hutchinson's request to declare a major disaster, pursuant to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief Act, as a result of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) beginning on January 20, 2020.

As Governor Hutchinson noted in his request, as of March 30, 2020, the state of Arkansas has 473 confirmed cases of COVID-19. To date, eight Arkansans have passed away because of the disease, with another 43 currently hospitalized, 16 of whom are currently on ventilators. Unfortunately, we expect those numbers to increase exponentially as the disease continues to spread.

To date, Governor Hutchinson has delegated \$43,250,000 from the Governor's Disaster Fund to be used to procure Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), understanding that Arkansas would not be receiving the amount necessary from the Strategic National Stockpile (SNS).

Due to the nationwide shortage of PPE, we fear Arkansas's first responders and medical personnel will not receive the lifesaving and necessary personal protective equipment needed to treat citizens with COVID-19. The figures below show the amount of PPE requested by entities throughout the state.

Product	Requested
Gloves	789,973
Face Shields	153,615
Protective Glasses	34,585
Safety Goggles	13,312
Isolation Gowns	186,349
Shoe Covers	45,071
N95 Masks	151,599
Surgical Masks	183,570
PAPR	460
Particulate	396
SCBA	276
No-Touch	
Thermometers	1,554
Other Thermometers	38,714

Rubbing Alcohol	6,643
Spray Sanitizer	12,387
Disinfectant	11,397
Disinfecting Wipes	85,483
Hand Sanitizer	42,250
Anti-bacterial	
Hand Soap	4,714

As it stands, Arkansas is unable to provide all of these necessary items. As the disease continues to spread throughout the state, the need for more PPE will continue to grow.

Additionally, the state is facing severe economic repercussions in the wake of COVID-19. Small businesses in Arkansas make up 99.3 percent of all businesses in the state, representing 490,000 employees, which is almost half of the states' workforce. Due to COVID-19, both small businesses and major employers have been forced to close their doors, compelling businesses to take drastic measures such as temporary or permanent lay-offs. Many of Arkansas's small businesses lack the capital to withstand weeks, let alone months, of closures.

We fear that without assistance from the Federal government, many of these small businesses will be unable to weather the storm, putting hundreds of thousands of hardworking Arkansans out of work, with few to any prospects of new employment opportunities. As of February 2020, the Arkansas unemployment rate was at 3.5 percent, however, we expect that rate to grow as the full economic impact of COVID-19 becomes more clear.

Unfortunately, Arkansas was already in the midst of recovering from multiple disasters before COVID-19. Since January 2018, the state of Arkansas has had 12 Gubernatorial Declared disasters and 3 federally declared disasters. In fact, as recently as March 28 of this year a tornado struck the city of Jonesboro, Arkansas causing severe damage.

Recent Presidential Major Disaster Declarations for Arkansas

- Arkansas COVID-19 (EM 3461) March 13, 2020
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Straight-line winds, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR 4460) Sept. 13, 2019
- Record breaking flooding along the Arkansas River that was included (EM 3414)
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line winds, and Flooding (DR 4318) April 26, 2017
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line winds, and Flooding (DR 4270) March 08, 2016
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line winds, and Flooding (DR 4254) Dec. 23, 2015
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, Straight-line winds, and Flooding (DR 4226) May 8, 2015
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR 4174) April 27, 2014
- Arkansas Severe Winter Storm (DR 4160) December 5, 2013
- Arkansas Severe Storms and Flooding (DR 4143) August 8, 2013
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR 4124) May 30, 2013

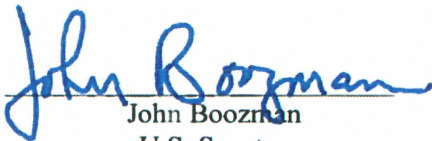
- Arkansas Severe Winter Storm (DR 4100) December 25, 2012
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR 4000) May 24, 2011
- Arkansas Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Flooding (DR 1975) April 14, 2011

The resourcefulness of Arkansans has been incredible to see. Faced with these unprecedented events, Arkansans have responded the only way they know how, with hard work, determination, kindness and compassion. From individual citizens to the private sector, we are seeing everyone chip in and do their part, to ensure our state comes out of the other side of this better than ever. While the state and its citizens are doing everything in their power to address this problem, we still need your help.


Without the assistance of a Major Disaster Declaration, it would be difficult for Arkansas to bare all of the responsibilities it will be facing in the coming months and focus the proper amount of time, energy and financial support necessary to get life back to normal.

The entire Arkansas delegation is eager to assist in any way possible to ensure expedited evaluation of this request. Please do not hesitate to contact our offices with any questions. We thank you for the support you have already offered, and respectfully ask for your continued attention and assistance in providing the resources necessary to ensure the safety of Arkansans.


Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator


Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator


Rick Crawford
Member of Congress


French Hill
Member of Congress


Steve Womack
Member of Congress


Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress