January 25, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to request expedited approval of Governor Mitch Daniels' request for a Major Disaster Area Declaration for the State of Indiana and Hazard Mitigation statewide as a result of severe storms and flooding that began on January 7, 2008 and is ongoing at the time of this writing. The effected counties are Carroll, Cass, Elkhart, Fulton, Jasper, Marshall, Pulaski, Tippecanoe and White. The communities affected by the storms and flooding are in serious need of federal assistance, and we fully support the Governor's request.

A combination of heavy snows, followed by unseasonably warm weather and heavy rains have contributed to a situation where historic flood waters have caused wide and severe damage across Indiana, and the full extent of the damage remains unknown as the flood waters have not yet receded in many areas. Two winter storms brought heavy snowfall to northern Indiana between December 16th and 17th and December 31st through January 2nd. These events were immediately followed by record high temperatures across northern and central Indiana on January 6th and 7th. As a result, flash flood watches were issued for many counties in the state on January 6th. On the evening of January 7th, severe thunderstorms brought up to eight inches of rain to already saturated soils and rivers that were already on the rise.

The Tippecanoe, Saint Joseph, Yellow, Kankakee, Eel, Little Calumet, Wabash and other rivers experienced major flooding. High waters are spreading elsewhere in the state, and ice jams have worsened the situation in some areas.

Three deaths have been attributed to the flooding, and hundreds of homes have been damaged or destroyed. While officials continue to take the floods' toll, available joint preliminary damage assessments indicate that more than 800 homes have been damaged and at least 400 of these sustained major damage or were destroyed. Infrastructure, especially levees and dams, have been tested as never before and continued high water and flooding downstream can be expected.

State and local agencies have responded heroically, and Hoosiers across the state are assisting in the clean up and recovery effort and responding with their typical generosity, toughness and indomitable spirit. However, we agree with and support the Governor's determination that the incident is of such severity and magnitude that

effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary.

We respectfully urge you to approve the Governor's full request as quickly as possible. We appreciate your serious consideration of this matter and look forward to working with you in any way to ensure that those affected by this disaster receive the appropriate assistance.

Sincerely,

Richard G. Lugar
United States Senator

Evan Bayh
United States Senator

Dan Burton
Member of Congress

Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress

Steve Buyer
Member of Congress

Mark Souder
Member of Congress

Baron Hill
Member of Congress

Mike Pence
Member of Congress

Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress

Brad Ellsworth
Member of Congress