

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2501

July 1, 2026

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Leader Jeffries, Chairman Cole, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As St. Louis communities recover from the 2025 storms, I urge you to bring supplemental disaster relief appropriations funding to the House floor as soon as possible.

On May 16, 2025, a severe weather system produced an EF-3 tornado that struck the St. Louis region and neighboring communities across Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana, and Ohio. With peak winds of 152 miles per hour, the tornado traveled nearly 23 miles and became the widest tornado recorded in the St. Louis region since modern records began in 1950.¹ The storm damaged or destroyed about 5,000 buildings, including homes, businesses, schools, and critical public facilities. More than 100,000 customers lost power, at least five people died, and dozens were injured. Local officials estimate total damages exceed \$1.6 billion.²

The tornado impacted communities already facing economic challenges and aging infrastructure, making recovery especially difficult in St. Louis's most vulnerable neighborhoods. Congress has not enacted a comprehensive supplemental disaster relief appropriations package since the American Relief Act, 2025 (Pub. L. No. 118-158), signed into law on December 21, 2024. While FEMA and other federal agencies have provided critical assistance, significant unmet recovery needs remain. Supplemental appropriations are

¹ National Weather Service, *Updated Damage Assessment for May 16, 2025 St. Louis Tornado* (St. Louis, MO: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2026); City of St. Louis, *STL Recovers: Impacted Area* (St. Louis, MO: City of St. Louis, 2025).

² National Weather Service, *Updated Damage Assessment for May 16, 2025 St. Louis Tornado* (St. Louis, MO: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2026); City of St. Louis, *STL Recovers: Impacted Area* (St. Louis, MO: City of St. Louis, 2025).

direly needed to help communities recover, restore housing and infrastructure, support local governments, and strengthen resilience against future disasters.

I urge Congress to act quickly ensure our community receives the resources needed to rebuild and recover from recent disasters. Local governments continue to bear the burden of increasingly frequent and severe natural disasters and require sustained federal partnership to respond effectively and recover fully. I respectfully urge you to bring a comprehensive supplemental disaster relief appropriations bill to the House floor that provides the resources necessary for my district and the other communities nationwide recovering from recent disasters.

Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'W3mP' with a large loop at the end.

Wesley Bell
Member of Congress