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## CONGRESSMAN KENDRICK B. MEEK

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Hon. R. David Paulison  
Acting Under Secretary of Emergency Preparedness and Response  
Acting Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency  
500 C Street S.W., Suite 828  
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Mr. Paulison:

I write to ask that the President immediately modify the disaster declaration that he issued today for Hurricane Wilma to include FEMA Individual Assistance for the residents of Miami-Dade and Broward Counties, Florida.

In addition, in view of the fact that Wilma is the eighth hurricane to hit Florida in 15 months and the second hurricane to hit Miami-Dade and Broward Counties in two months, I ask you to reconsider FEMA's decision to deny Individual Assistance to those residents who suffered damage from Hurricane Katrina.

I feel I have to write this letter to you because we all assumed that FEMA would have provided aid to our residents who sustained damage from Hurricane Katrina, and that was not the case. I saw your 3 p.m. press conference, but South Floridians need to be assured now that FEMA will be there for them to help them with the damage that is obvious to everyone in our community. As a Member of Congress who serves on the FEMA oversight committee, after what happened in New Orleans, I assume nothing, and that is why I am writing this letter to you now.

As you know, the President's Disaster Declaration included Public Assistance to Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Indian River, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, St. Lucie and Sarasota Counties for Public Assistance to the state, cities and counties for debris removal and emergency protective measures.

However, only Collier, Lee and Monroe Counties were included for Individual Assistance, which provides temporary housing, repair, medical, personal property and other assistance, even though Governor Bush asked that several more counties, including Miami-Dade and Broward, be included.

FEMA staff has said that these counties were approved for Individual Assistance based on an assessment made from forecasts before the storm, location of landfall, weather reports and information on the ground and in the media. On this basis, Miami-Dade and Broward Counties should certainly be eligible for Individual Assistance. I can tell you that damage in these areas is extensive, based on my own, personal observations, reports from our local governments and from dozens of our residents.

Damage throughout our community is extensive. Few homes are without roof damage, including roofs blown away; roofs with most of the shingles gone; carports and fences basically blown apart; damaged vehicles; a number of businesses in which the entire front has been blown away; and trees and utility poles down everywhere. Home damage from flying debris is not just common, it is the norm. An estimated 2 million people are without power in the Miami-Dade area. Our local news media have documented the damage; you need only to watch television to see what our community has sustained. Even by FEMA's standards, it is clear that this damage is extensive and severe enough to warrant immediate eligibility for FEMA Individual Assistance.

In addition, although FEMA declared that the damage to Miami-Dade and Broward Counties was not of the magnitude or severity to warrant FEMA Individual Assistance, I ask that you reconsider this decision in light of the unprecedented burden on our state and our communities that this one-two punch of Katrina and Wilma. It is arbitrary and wrong for FEMA, which is supposed to help our communities rebuild after natural disasters, to withhold assistance to the hundreds of our residents who suffered damage from Hurricane Katrina.

As you know, our State Director of the Division of Emergency Management appealed FEMA's denial of Individual Assistance for Hurricane Katrina Victims. I urge you to reconsider this decision, especially in light of what has happened to our community today.

I ask your immediate attention to these important matters and thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

Sincerely yours,



KENDRICK B. MEEK  
Member of Congress