

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 31, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
Office of the President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

We are grateful to all law enforcement officers, first responders, and emergency officials in the State of Georgia working tirelessly in response to Hurricane Idalia.

At this time, the total cost and scale of the damage are unknown, and state, local, and Federal officials continue to assess the situation while engaging in recovery efforts, but should the Governor of Georgia request Federal disaster assistance for Georgia counties impacted by Hurricane Idalia, we write to request that you issue it expeditiously.

According to state and Federal officials, as well as local reports, the damage in many Georgia communities, including Valdosta, Georgia in Lowndes County among other areas, is of such severity and magnitude that effective response may be beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments.

On August 30, 2023, according to the National Weather Service, Hurricane Idalia moved into and across southern Georgia at close to 20 miles per hour. The National Weather Service initially projected that Idalia was expected to produce a swath of 4 to 8 inches of rainfall with isolated amounts of up to 12 inches from portions of southern and central Georgia. These rainfall amounts led to areas of flooding, with considerable damage to the region.

In the city of Valdosta, officials and community leaders have reported to our offices extensive damage, including fallen trees, property damage, power outages, internet outages, and flooding. Valdosta Mayor Scott James Matheson, when describing one of the streets in his community, said, “[The street] looks like a bomb went off ... Trees down, houses lost.”

Georgia farmers and growers have reported widespread damage, including severe damage to potentially tens of thousands of Pecan trees and other crops.

Based on the severity of the damage to many southern Georgia communities, and the extensive need in affected areas, if the Governor of Georgia requests federal assistance we encourage your team to move quickly to support Georgians impacted by this deadly storm. We thank you for your prompt consideration. We stand ready to work with you and your Administration to support these critical recovery efforts in Georgia.

Sincerely,



Raphael Warnock
United States Senator



Jon Ossoff
United States Senator