

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

April 10, 2014

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary
U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

We write to urge you to approve the Secretarial Disaster Designation for Snohomish County requested by Washington Governor Jay Inslee on April 10, 2014.

As you know, on Saturday, March 22, 2014, a massive landslide near Oso, Washington, in Snohomish County, destroyed homes, damaged public infrastructure, and blocked the Stillaguamish River. More than 35 people have lost their lives, 21 have been injured, and 10 are still unaccounted for and presumed to be in the disaster area. State Route 530, the primary transportation artery between Arlington and the small communities of Oso and Darrington to the east, has been closed indefinitely due to the landslide.

Washington state is home to a strong agriculture economy, with farmers, growers, and agriculture businesses located throughout our state. Snohomish County is no exception to that rule. Due to the extreme devastation, the full extent of agricultural losses is unknown at this time. However, crops known to be grown in the affected region are hay, Christmas trees, and pasture lands. Livestock, including dairies and sheep farms, are also located in the disaster area.

We are enormously proud of the more than 730 first responders and search and rescue personnel from multiple local and state agencies who have responded heroically to this tragedy. We also deeply appreciate the commitment of the many citizen volunteers, charities, businesses, and local elected officials who have risen to serve their neighbors during this very difficult time.

While local communities and state agencies have responded admirably, a disaster of this magnitude requires long-term federal assistance to help in the response and recovery effort. A Secretarial Disaster Designation will provide farmers, residents, and businesses in Snohomish County with access to low-interest loans and other important disaster assistance opportunities. We therefore urge you to approve a Secretarial Disaster Designation as requested by Governor Inslee.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

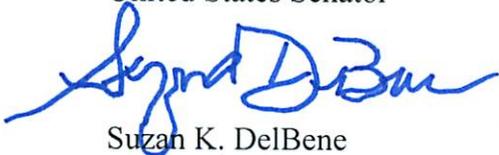
Sincerely,



Patty Murray
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress