The Vermont Congressional Delegation (Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Bernie Sanders, and Rep. Peter Welch) Wednesday night asked President Bush for a disaster declaration to make Vermont eligible for federal disaster relief after last week's Nor'easter. The Delegation timed the letter to buttress Gov. Jim Douglas' request to the President for a disaster declaration. The text of the Delegation's letter to President Bush follows, below:

April 25, 2007

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to ask that you declare an emergency for the state of Vermont, which will make the state eligible for federal funds necessary to recover from a recent severe storm. Federal funding is particularly needed for cleanup and recovery to public property, as well as hazard mitigation.

Last week, a Nor'easter moved through the state, bringing fierce winds and heavy precipitation. Trees, hundreds of years old, fell on power-lines, homes, and businesses. There has been major flooding in the southern portion of the state, and large sections of southern Vermont counties remained without power for days. Well over 15,000 power outages were reported.

After the emergency, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) established a field office in Rutland. Representatives from the agency visited several of the affected areas, and the damage assessment determined that well over $2 million in damage occurred across the state. Among the seven counties in the State that likely qualify for public assistance -- including Windham, Windsor, Bennington, Rutland, Caledonia, Essex, and Orange Counties -- Windham County alone had damage well over $1 million. As the specific needs of communities become clearer the cleanup funding promises only to increase.

It is one of the greatest responsibilities of the federal government to ensure that our state and local governments can cleanup after a natural disaster.

Sincerely,

PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator

BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator

PETER WELCH
United States Representative