

News from Senator

# BOB DOLE



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## DOLE CALLS ON PRESIDENT TO REVERSE FEDERAL DECISION ON HALSTEAD DISASTER DECLARATION

WASHINGTON -- In a letter to President Jimmy Carter, Senator Bob Dole (R-Kan.) today called on the President to reverse Monday's decision by the Federal Emergency Management Administration to deny the area around Halstead, Kan., disaster status as a result of flooding this October.

Following is the text of the Dole letter:

Dear Mr. President:

This October, torrential downpours and blizzard-like conditions rampaged the state of Kansas causing heavy flooding along the Little Arkansas River. When the weather cleared, hundreds of people were unable to return to their homes and damage to personal, agricultural, and public property totaled \$20 million. Wisely, Governor John Carlin declared the area a disaster and applied to the Federal Emergency Management Administration for disaster relief funds.

On November 26, FEMA denied his request, contending that state and local resources were adequate to absorb the cost of a rebuilding effort.

FEMA's observation about state and local financing capabilities tends to indicate a misunderstanding about the situation in Kansas. It seems inconceivable to me that a total damage estimate of \$20 million is felt to be within the limits of state and local budgets -- especially when funds for relief purposes have been severely depleted by the devastating effects of winter storms earlier this year. Even more disheartening is FEMA's apparent failure to recognize the degree of suffering and inconvenience inflicted upon those who were tragically stricken by this disaster.

Granted, no lives were lost during the flood. Granted, the communities involved were small rural towns and not large cities. Granted, the suffering caused by this tragedy did not dominate the national press. However, this does not excuse the federal government from its responsibility to its citizens who have been victimized by an unforeseen natural disaster.

It is for these reasons that I strongly urge you to encourage the Federal Emergency Management Administration to accept the governor's appeal and to reverse their previous decision.

Sincerely,

BOB DOLE  
United States Senate