

Cooper Urges End To Shutdown So Hurricane Recovery Can Continue

By Administrator
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Governor Roy Cooper today wrote to President Donald Trump to urge him to end the federal government shutdown that is holding back hurricane recovery efforts and threatening North Carolina's farming economy. "While we continue the short-term recovery with FEMA's help, our critical long-term work to rebuild stronger and smarter is delayed with every day that federal funds are held in Washington," Gov. Cooper wrote in the letter sent today.

In April 2018, North Carolina was notified of a \$168 million award of Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) from the US Housing and Urban Development to make the state's flood-prone areas safer. The state remains unable to use these funds until guidance is published in the Federal Register, which cannot happen while the federal government remains shuttered.

In September, a HUD appropriation for 2018 storms including Hurricane Florence was enacted as part of the FAA reauthorization bill but awaits allocation to affected states. The \$1.68 billion allocated will be shared by North Carolina and other states recovering from natural disasters, but without guidance states are left waiting to learn how much funding they will receive and how best to put these funds to work for recovery and mitigation.

The shutdown also limits North Carolina's access to HUD experts needed to help with rebuilding efforts in the state. In addition, North Carolina farmers are without help from federal agriculture experts at a critical time.

"The government shutdown is also threatening the livelihood of our farmers, many of whom were swamped by the same hurricane waters that destroyed homes and businesses," Gov. Cooper wrote in his letter. "Help from the US Department of Agriculture for hurricane affected farms is unavailable, and farmers hoping to plan for this year's planting season are running out of time."

Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina on September 13, grinding across the state for days and dumping 8 trillion gallons of rain. The storm took 41 lives, flooded whole cities, and ruined homes, crops, schools and entire communities. Many parts of North Carolina hit hard by Florence were still working to recover from Hurricane Matthew, which hit the state just two years prior.

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"The people of North Carolina are strong and are working hard to rebuild. But we are equally determined to hold the federal government to its promise of help," Gov. Cooper wrote to President Trump. " During your visit following Hurricane Florence, you promised me the 100% support of the federal government in North Carolina's recovery. This shutdown makes that promise harder to keep. Please work with Congressional leaders to end this shutdown so our communities can rebuild quickly and effectively."