

Utica, NY – Last night President Bush responded to U.S. Representative Michael A. Arcuri's (D-Utica) request for Federal assistance and issued an emergency declaration for Oneida County as well as surrounding counties affected by this month's heavy snow.

"I spent this past week at home in Utica, and I spoke with families, small business owners, and emergency responders affected by this month's extreme snow fall." Arcuri said. "I am glad that the President recognizes the need for Federal assistance here in Oneida County and has answered the requests of myself and Governor Spitzer for an emergency declaration. I will work with local first responders and transportation departments to make sure they get the federal support and resources they need to help our community move forward."

On February 23rd, President Bush declared an emergency for the State of New York. Under the emergency declaration Federal funds will be available to help local communities respond to the snow storms that hit the area between February 2nd and 12th.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is authorized to provide assistance for emergency protective measures, which includes snow removal, under the Public Assistance program to protect property and maintain public health and safety. Lewis, Oneida, and Oswego Counties will receive Federal assistance.

An emergency declaration occurs when the President determines that Federal assistance is needed to help State and local efforts and capabilities to save lives and protect property and public health and safety. Total assistance provided in any given emergency declaration may not exceed \$5,000,000, except when the Associate Director decides that continued assistance is required.

On Thursday, February 15th Arcuri sent a letter to President Bush asking him to declare a state of emergency in Oneida County.

The letter is attached below:

February 15, 2007

President George W. Bush
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As you may know, parts of Upstate of New York were recently hit with a severe winter storm that over the course of the past two weeks has dumped record amounts of snow throughout the area. My home county of Oneida has received 27 inches of snow just in the last few days.

This storm has already caused significant disruption to essential services throughout the county and has imperiled thousands of citizens. While this record snowfall has already prompted Governor Spitzer to declare a State Disaster Emergency for this area, I am concerned that ongoing severe weather conditions could endanger continuing snow removal efforts and cause further strains on the state and local agencies already stressed from the scope and severity of the storm.

It is my understanding that Governor Spitzer has made a formal request to you for a federal declaration of emergency for a host of Upstate New York counties, including Oneida County, which would thus trigger the critical support from the federal government for emergency services, aid and other relief. By all accounts, the Governor has taken every step to employ resources of the State to meet this emergency head on including the deployment of the National Guard, the dispatch of essential State personnel to the affected areas and coordination of all of the relevant state agencies.

Nevertheless, a storm of this magnitude and the record snowfall that has accompanied it require federal assistance for the affected areas to ensure against the loss of life, as well as, property and to ensure the provision of essential health and public safety services.

The towns and cities in Upstate New York impacted by this record snow storm need this

assistance immediately. I therefore urge you to support the Governor's request and declare a state of emergency for the counties outlined by the Governor.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this most urgent matter. I am standing by to work with you and the appropriate federal agencies to ensure an expeditious and satisfactory response to this emergency.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL A. ARCURI
Member of Congress

Cc: The Honorable R. David Paulison, FEMA Director
The Honorable Steven C. Preston, Administrator, U.S. SBA
The Honorable Michael O. Johanns, Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture

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