

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

DELEGATION OFFICE
STATE OF NEW MEXICO
HART SENATE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510
(202) 224 - 8962

October 6, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

We respectfully request that you take immediate action on the Zuni Tribe's recent request for a major disaster declaration in response to severe storms that triggered significant flash flooding and caused extensive damage in the Pueblo of Zuni between July 16, 2026, to July 28, 2026. The severity and magnitude of the storms and subsequent flash flooding overwhelmed Zuni Tribal resources, and they require supplemental, Federal assistance to ensure the Tribal Nation can recover.

The Zuni Tribe is requesting Public Assistance (PA), Categories A through G, as well as Individual Assistance (IA), including Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance, Disaster Case Management, and Individuals and Households Program Assistance, and statewide assistance from the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. We ask that you expeditiously grant the declaration and make this federal assistance available as soon as possible.

Three thunderstorm events on July 16, 21, and 28, 2026, in the Zuni Pueblo area produced heavy rainfall, with National Weather Service (NWS) radar and local rain gauge data indicating it was a 100-year flood event. This rainfall overtopped levees, riverbanks, and earthen dams, flooding paved roads and Zuni Village itself, and caused significant damage to private property, community infrastructure, ceremonial trails, and culturally significant sites. Sixty-one families were displaced, twelve families required sheltering, and four individuals required swift water rescue; six families are still in shelters.

The Zuni Tribe is a federally recognized sovereign Tribal Nation and one of the oldest continuously inhabited communities in North America. The Zuni Tribe serves as a steward of a nationally significant historic, cultural, and religious landscape. And in addition to extensive damage to public infrastructure and private property, the flash floods described above also severely impacted seven ceremonial trails and multiple culturally significant locations. Washouts, erosion, and material loss to those paths and sacred ruins – some dating back to the early 1500s – have affected the ancestral, ceremonial, and historic resources central to the Tribe's cultural heritage.

Restoration work will need to be performed using culturally appropriate methods, require specialized preservation oversight, and preserve the confidentiality of these sites.

In the wake of the flash flooding, the Zuni Tribe requested federal assistance with a Preliminary Damage Assessment, and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) staff and Zuni staff conducted site visits throughout the entire reservation. As of September 25, 2026, FEMA's estimate for the assessed damage was \$1,222,135. The severity and extent of the flooding required tribal resources to be diverted to emergency protective measures and hazardous debris removal. Recovery will require repairs to roadways and drainage systems, utility restoration, support for displaced families, and culturally appropriate preservation work. In totality, the impacts from these floods will require federal assistance, as they have exceeded the capabilities of the Zuni Tribe.

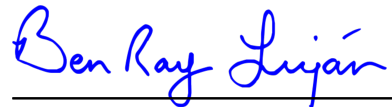
We fully support the Zuni Tribe's request, and we urge you to act without delay. It is imperative that the federal government provides full support to the Zuni Tribe to recover from the devastation caused by this flooding.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

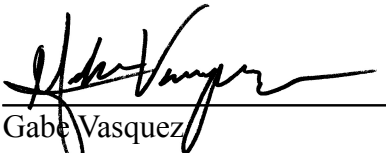
Sincerely,



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



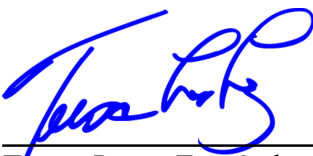
Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernández
Member of Congress