Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

June 6, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Through: Mr. Ken Murphy, Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Region 10
130 228 Street SW
Bothell, WA 98201-9796

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to strongly support a federal disaster declaration requested for areas of Interior Alaska submitted by Governor Sean Parnell on June 1.
As a result of significant seasonal ice jam flooding, communities in this region of Alaska experienced serious flooding. The villages of Crooked Creek and Red Devil have been greatly devastated. Crooked Creek has experienced the worst flooding in recorded history with river levels rising 30 feet at the peak of the flood.

According to the State of Alaska, about 66 percent of housing in this village has been damaged or destroyed. Not connected to the road system, helicopters have had to ferry residents out of the destroyed village. In this remote area of Alaska, an emergency response is constrained, requiring tenacious concentration to help those dislocated and distressed.

These isolated areas of Alaska make emergency response challenging and we want to ensure that we have all the resources possible at our disposal. Your immediate attention and declaration will help ensure that we are doing everything possible to protect life and property in Alaska.

Although Public Assistance will offer much needed support to the region, aid should and must be supplemented with Individual Assistance (IA). As population numbers in the Crooked Creek and Red Devil communities are small, their remoteness should be considered as reflective of their urgent need for IA.

The lack of formal leadership has left remaining resources sparse and largely unavailable to the majority of residents. Those impacted have needed, and continue to need, mental health support - especially for the affected children who have been left traumatized by the catastrophic damage done to their communities.

The region's necessity is compounded by the destruction of their subsistence cache and the tools to maintain it. These losses could leave communities without food for a full year. Additionally, the subsistence lifestyle, as much as it maintains these communities, also perpetuates and informs traditional Alaska Native culture and society.

The injection of public and individual assistance into these communities will sustain their lifestyle, identity and a quality of life that upholds human dignity. We urge you to make the federal disaster declaration for the communities of Red Devil and Crooked, and to make available both public and individual assistance.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this critical request.

Sincerely,

Lisa Murkowski
US Senator

Mark Begich
US Senator