Town of Lake City

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November 18, 2026

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

Dear President Trump,

As community members, leaders, and elected officials representing southwestern Colorado, we write in strong support of the State of Colorado's expedited Major Disaster Declaration request for flooding in southwest Colorado starting October 22, 2026. We urgently request your swift approval of federal disaster assistance to support our communities in recovering from the historic, catastrophic flooding and debris flows that struck our region between.

Our rural communities and volunteer services have withstood incredible strain from these floods and after dedicating ourselves to keeping each other safe, we are exhausted and need your help to rebuild. We have endured devastating, back-to-back autumn floods, being forced to absorb repeated destruction including from the damaging flooding in October 2025, which already significantly strained our resources. Over the past twelve months, our state has managed twelve declared disasters, depleting state emergency reserves and exhausting local fiscal capacity. With an incoming winter storm cycle threatening secondary washouts on already fragile, waterlogged terrain, our rural communities need help from FEMA.

A continuous surge of deep tropical moisture drawn from the remnants of Hurricane Trudy, combined with rapid unseasonal snowmelt from high-elevation peaks, triggered unprecedented runoff across our river basins. In Archuleta County, the San Juan River at Pagosa Springs crested at 15.02 feet, more than two feet above major flood stage, marking the second-highest crest in over 115 years of recordkeeping, and shattering the flood levels our community endured just twelve months ago. Along the Piedra River near Arboles, flood levels crested at 10.48 feet, breaking the previous 1970 record by more than four feet. Across the San Juan range and San Luis Valley, record-breaking waters tore through low-lying neighborhoods, washed out vital transportation arteries, submerged critical municipal utility facilities, and trapped residents behind compromised roads.

Compounding this disaster is the extensive destruction of essential public infrastructure. Joint preliminary damage assessments conducted by FEMA, state, and local emergency

management have already validated $26.99 million in Public Assistance-eligible damages across Archuleta and Rio Grande counties alone, more than double Colorado's statewide per capita threshold. This preliminary baseline reflects only the sites field teams could safely reach during an expedited multi-day assessment window.

Validated impacts include more than $10.6 million in damage to local roads, bridges, and culverts, such as severe multi-point washouts along County Road 500 and the partial failure of the Escondida Bridge, alongside $8.59 million in destroyed river parks and recreation structures in Pagosa Springs. Furthermore, over $2.4 million in critical utility damage has taken offline municipal lift stations, washed away sewer mains, impacted sanitation districts, and contaminated dozens of rural private domestic water wells with E. coli.

President Trump, our hardworking communities, families, and businesses urgently request federal partnership to recover. We respectfully ask for your immediate approval of the Major Disaster Declaration for FEMA Public Assistance (Categories A–G), and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) for the affected southwest jurisdictions, so that we may restore vital public services and be better able to withstand future disasters.

Sincerely,

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