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## Tuesday, April 28, 2026

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# Bipartisan federal lawmakers request disaster declaration following tornadoes

The state's two U.S. senators and two Republican members of the U.S. House on Tuesday pushed the Small Business Administration to honor [Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's](#) request for an administrative disaster declaration following March tornadoes in Southwest Michigan.

[U.S. Sen. Gary Peters](#), D-Bloomfield Township, [U.S. Sen. Elissa Slotkin](#), D-Holly, [U.S. Rep. Tim Walberg](#), R-Tipton, and [U.S. Rep. Bill Huizenga](#), R-Zeeland, sent a letter to the SBA requested continued support for the affected regions including the counties of Branch, Cass and St. Joseph, in which four residents died and homes across the area were destroyed.

Whitmer requested low-interest loans to be made available to help the communities recover. The letter said the burden of clean up would be disproportionate, "impacting low-income, uninsured, disabled, and senior residents."

The letter acknowledges the Small Business Administration has worked with the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Michigan Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division, and county officials to conduct damage assessment of the impacted areas, and that the counties met the threshold for support for the loans, according to the letter.

A joint damage assessment with local, state and federal officials was conducted on March 17 to assess and validate the most severely affected areas.

"The hardworking people and businesses of Michigan are strong and resilient," the letter said. "Yet, local capacity is limited, and recovery

of this magnitude requires a coordinated effort at all levels of government. As such, we respectfully request that SBA swiftly approve Governor Whitmer's request for an administrative declaration of disaster. This declaration would make available critical federal support and resources to struggling homeowners and business owners as they recover from these devastating tornadoes."

Whitmer announced her disaster declaration for presidential approval on April 1. The request will be reviewed by FEMA.

– By Liz Nass

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