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Whitmer announces disaster declaration for Southwest MI tornadoes

The U.S. Small Business Association granted an administrative disaster declaration for Branch, Cass and St. Joseph counties following March tornadoes, [Gov. Gretchen Whitmer](#) said in a statement Thursday.

"Following deadly tornadoes in Southwestern Michigan, communities are working hard to rebuild," Whitmer said in a statement. "We're working side by side with them every step of the way to deliver real relief. This SBA declaration will help us connect communities and small businesses with the resources they need to get back on their feet. Michiganders are strong, and we will get through this. Let's keep doing the work together to make a difference."

The administration will provide low interest loans to repair or replace property damaged during the tornadoes. The loans include business physical disaster loans, economic injury disaster loans for small businesses and home disaster loans.

[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 this week to the SBA to urge fulfilling Whitmer's request in April.

"I'm glad that SBA granted the disaster declaration requested by Governor Whitmer and supported by bipartisan members of the Michigan congressional delegation," Peters said in a statement Thursday. "People and businesses affected by the tornadoes across Southwest Michigan will now be eligible for low-interest federal disaster loans to help rebuild and recover from these devastating storms."

Walberg said in a statement the swift action from the administration "will help ensure that community members and small businesses have access to the financial support they need to recover and rebuild. In moments like this, timely assistance makes a real difference, and this support will help our communities move forward from this tragic weather event with resilience and hope."

– By Liz Nass

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