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## Office of the Governor

February 9, 2017

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

Through: Dr. Ahsha Tribble, Acting Regional Administrator  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Region IX  
1111 Broadway Street, Suite 1200  
Oakland, CA 94607

Dear Mr. President:

I respectfully request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Nevada as a result of severe and widespread flooding that occurred in the counties of Washoe, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, the City of Carson City, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. The State of Nevada seeks federal assistance through the public assistance program and the hazard mitigation program. This request is being made pursuant to the provisions of Section 410 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207, as implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36.

### **BACKGROUND**

Between the dates of January 5, 2017, and January 14, 2017, Nevada was impacted by a severe weather event caused by a series of atmospheric rivers, resulting in record rainfall and record snowfall in Northern Nevada. During this event, Northern Nevada received half of its annual average rainfall, totaling 4.6 inches of 7.5 inches annually, and according to records, the eastern front of the Sierra Nevada Mountains near Lake Tahoe received 358 inches of snow when the average January snowfall is 74 inches. The combination of melting snow and unusually heavy rains resulted in widespread flooding along the rivers and urban flood prone areas in Northern Nevada. The flooding affected residents in the counties of Washoe, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, the City of Carson City, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. The flooding caused damage to homes, property, and businesses,

including areas within tribal jurisdictions. Water and debris damaged dozens of homes and businesses. It flooded or washed out 88 county transportation routes and 20 state transportation routes, engaging first response emergency agencies at all levels of government.

Many residents were instructed to shelter in place for multiple days due to closed transportation routes from the effects of flooding as well as the effects of unmanageable quantities of snow, including avalanche danger. Use of heavy equipment was necessary for debris removal, snow management, and the delivery of water, food, and various survival supplies to families who lost access to roads.

The counties of Washoe, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, the City of Carson City, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California declared local emergencies, and in turn, requested assistance from the State of Nevada. A State Declaration of Emergency was issued on January 7, 2017, and amended on February 2, 2017, pursuant to state law, for the above listed city, counties, and tribes. This Declaration activated state resources to assist local and tribal governments through the State Emergency Operations Plan (EOP), in accordance with Section 501(a) of the Stafford Act.

The United States Department of Homeland Security (FEMA Region IX) provided a team to assist Nevada in conducting local, state, tribal, and federal technical assistance and preliminary damage assessments (PDA). A joint team was assembled to conduct damage assessment on the affected areas. The joint damage assessment team met from January 30, 2017, through February 3, 2017, to survey the damaged areas and estimate the costs to return the communities back to pre-disaster conditions.

The initial PDA analysis revealed that severe damage occurred to public infrastructure, including roads, bridges, culverts, buildings, equipment, utilities, and parks. At least 36 homes were seriously damaged throughout all of the counties and tribal jurisdictions assessed, and portions of 108 roads were damaged and needed to be repaired/cleared to allow for emergency responder access. The transportation damages include the following roadways: Interstate 580, Interstate 80, State Route 206 (Genoa Lane), State Route 207 (Kingsbury Grade), State Route 2671 (Holcomb Lane), State Route 341 (Geiger Grade), State Route 342, State Route 439 (USA Parkway), State Route 445 (Pyramid Way), State Route 446 (Sutcliffe Highway), State Route 447, State Route 887 (Franktown Road), State Route 647 (W. 4th Street), State Route 659 (McCarran Loop), State Route 667 SB (Kietzke Lane), State Route 757 (Muller Lane), US 395, US 395A, US50, US 50A. US 95 was closed at Walker Lake due to rockslide for 7 to 8 hours. This is a truck route and the main road between Las Vegas and Reno.

There were debris removal efforts and emergency protective measures on county roads as well as permanent work. Permanent work sites captured in our PDA are included in Enclosure B: Preliminary Estimate of Damages by Categories Needed under the Stafford Act.

1. Washoe County was impacted by flooding along Truckee River, Steamboat Creek, and locally, resulting in evacuations. I-80 WEST OF RENO 13 miles of highway was closed down to one lane westbound and one eastbound for 3 days. This is the main route between Reno and Sacramento. Heavy traffic in the area impacted travel for tourists and workers that commute to and from Truckee for work. 431 MT. ROSE HIGHWAY was closed due to recurrent avalanches and avalanche controls. This is the main route between Lake Tahoe and Reno. Commuters to and from Incline Village were seriously impacted as well as three ski resorts Mt. Rose, Diamond Peak and Sky Tavern and local businesses. Multiple avalanches on Mount Rose Highway caused repeated closures limiting access to and from Incline Village, where 7,500 residents were left without power and asked to shelter in place due to extreme avalanche danger. A mudslide at Red Rock blocked access to and from the Rancho Haven Community, and boil water orders were issued for Verdi and the Sutcliffe community of the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal Reservation. Several privately-owned access roads into neighborhoods in the unincorporated areas of Washoe County were also washed out, stranding residents until county road crews could provide temporary repairs for life/safety protection.
2. Douglas County experienced flooding and road closures due to a sinkhole and avalanche. 207-KINGSBURY GRADE was closed for 5 days between Tramway Drive and Foothill Drive due to a sinkhole. This closure is on the Carson Valley side of Kingsbury Grade. Residences and businesses in the Tahoe area of Kingsbury Grade remained accessible. Unfortunately, with the overwhelming amount of precipitation, additional erosion occurred in the area, particularly to drainage areas. Alternative routes between the Carson Valley and Lake Tahoe are available through U.S. 50, State Route 431 and various routes in California however these routes were also impacted by hazardous conditions. Many Carson Valley residents work in South Lake Tahoe ski resorts and businesses. The closure of this road is a serious impact to employees who must drive another 20 miles out of their way over other storm impacted roads. This is the most direct access to South Lake Tahoe resorts from Highway 395 which impacts tourism to the area. Multiple roads were washed out and undermined in several areas. Water control systems have been inundated with debris and undermined by rushing waters. Damages to riverbanks caused flooding in one mobile home park, and three mobile home parks were evacuated due to flooding.
3. Lyon County experienced significant flooding and power outages that caused the evacuation and sheltering of 110 residents. Some privately-owned access roads into neighborhoods were washed out, making them inaccessible. Dozens of homes were impacted by damage to driveways, culverts, and fencing. In addition to roadway damage, water control ditches and retention basins were blown out and filled with debris.

4. Storey County experienced washed out roads, flooding in the Lockwood community, a mudslide on SR341, and damage to culverts and water diversion systems and riverbanks. Heavy snowstorms complicated damage assessment and repairs to roads. Nevada National Guard was needed to provide assistance with snow removal. STATE ROUTE 342 in GOLD HILL AREA was closed 5 days. This is the main access for tourists and residents to Virginia City from Carson City. State Route 342 between Virginia City and the SR 341 junction south of Gold Hill was closed due to flood-related damages. Specifically, roadway shoulders and guardrail on a section of the northbound lane was damaged. The nearby alternate route of SR 341 was intermittently available.
5. The City of Carson City experienced flooding and major roadway damage. Public parks were seriously impacted by washouts and debris. Some public buildings were impacted by water intrusion and require mold abatement. Wastewater treatment facilities were damaged as well.
6. The Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe experienced a water line break on Reservation land, affecting 650 residents, leaving them without potable water and sewer services. Extensive damage to state roads in the Pyramid Lake area 446 Pyramid are closed still. This is the main access for the Tribal community between Nixon and Sutcliffe. Some of the greatest flood damage to state roads occurred in the Pyramid Lake area, with extensive damage to State Routes 445, 446 and 447. State Route 446 is currently only open to emergency vehicles. Many sections of State Routes 445 (Pyramid Highway), 446 and 447 were damaged by washouts and water flowing over the roadway. NDOT is clearing and evaluating roadway damages and has begun contracting for emergency repairs to areas of washout, but sections of state roads in the Pyramid Lake area will continue to be closed indefinitely as repairs are made.

Highway 446, which provides access to services for the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, was washed out and impassable. Surprise Valley Road, a secondary road to Gerlach and Susanville, was washed out cutting off a community of 21 ranches on the reservation. All recreational activities at Pyramid Lake were discontinued indefinitely due to hazardous conditions and utility outages, and the boat launch facility that is used by the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe for search and rescue operations has been damaged and rendered unusable until the ramp area can be dredged and the boat docks repaired. Additionally, the Virginia Peak station communications repeaters were rendered inoperable due to power outages, resulting in the inability to conduct radio communications.

In the interests of public safety the Tribe closed Pyramid Lake to the public. During this period, the Tribe cannot issue any Tribal recreation permits to the public resulting in a loss of permit revenue during the winter fishing season at Pyramid Lake. Estimates of loss are not available at this time.

Due to the lack of potable water in the Sutcliffe community and subsequent closure of Pyramid Lake to the public, the Tribe sustained a loss of business revenue from Tribal owned and operated business in Sutcliffe. In Sutcliffe, the Tribe operates the Pyramid Lake Marina convenience store and the Pyramid Lake Marina RV Park. Estimates of loss are not available at this time.

With the lack of potable water in the Sutcliffe community and subsequent closure of Pyramid Lake to the public, the Tribe sustained loss of tax revenue from all businesses in Sutcliffe. The Tribe collects sales tax, fuel tax, and transient lodging taxes from Tribal-owned and other private businesses in Sutcliffe. Estimates of loss are not available at this time.

7. The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony activated the Reno Indian Colony Emergency Operations Center, emergency management staff and volunteers to provide 376 total hours for emergency protective measures across their jurisdiction. While the Indian Colony was successful in preventing damage to their infrastructure, the intense rains caused damage to several graves in their cemetery.
8. The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California sustained damages to their Wellness Center roof, which resulted in leakage and water damage during the storm. Tribal road staff addressed flooding at the Indian Creek Bridge on Memdewee Run (Ranch Road) south of Dresslerville, cleared debris clogging the bridge, and noted approximately 111 square feet of undermined upstream roadway.

The repair, along with debris removal, emergency response, and other protective measures, resulted in substantial costs, as shown in the attached PDA report. Based on these findings, I have determined that the damages created by the severe winter storm, and resulting flooding, are of such severity and magnitude that effective response and recovery is beyond the capabilities of the State of Nevada and the affected communities. Federal assistance is necessary.

## **RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

The response by public and private partners to the January 2017 winter storm event, and resulting flooding, reflected a well-coordinated, whole community approach to assisting disaster-impacted areas in Nevada. Local, state, and tribal officials issued emergency declarations and activated emergency operations plans. Public information announcements were coordinated utilizing television, radio, newspaper, and social media. Public safety organizations transmitted emergency and other data to ambulance crews, fire departments, law enforcement, public works, and other response units. State and local health departments provided technical assistance to ensure safe drinking water. Law enforcement, in conjunction with transportation officials, determined traffic movement restriction and coordinated safety support. Public works crews closed and flagged roads, and also determined the extent of damages. Fire crews and engineers assisted with impact assessments. Emergency managers coordinated resource requests and damage assessments in their respective communities.

Nevada agencies provided the following support:

1. Governor's Office – Staff members have conducted site visits, monitored conditions, and coordinated with federal, state, local, and tribal partners to identify recovery and mitigation measures.
2. Nevada Division of Emergency Management (DEM) – DEM participated in National Weather Service, federal, state, local, and tribal briefings, and posted information on WebEOC, which is Nevada's online incident management system. State Emergency Operation Center (SEOC) staff coordinated 113 resource requests by local jurisdictions, tribal reservations, and state agencies to save lives, protect property, and to initiate short-term recovery measures. State Emergency Operations Center staff also disseminated impact analyses and daily situation reports. Additionally:
  - State Technical Assistance and Response Teams conducted damage assessments, organized the PDA in coordination with FEMA, and provided recovery program guidance.
  - DEM provided a communications network for receiving and transmitting emergency and warning information among all levels of government and also provided support to emergency operations staff.
3. Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT) – NDOT collaborated with the Nevada Highway Patrol to issue travel alerts and advisories as storm conditions intensified. NDOT road maintenance crews were out in force prior to and during the heavy rains and flooding, clearing state freeway drainages. NDOT contractors staged heavy equipment at dozens of state road bridges from Reno south to the Carson Valley to remove flood-related debris, etc. In addition, more than 50 NDOT staff volunteers were mobilized to man state road closures. NDOT assisted with redirecting traffic, closed roads and initiated immediate repair of the roads listed above, which was necessary to provide access for emergency responders and ensure public safety.
4. Nevada Highway Patrol (NHP) – NHP coordinated with NDOT to assess conditions, close roads, re-route traffic, escort essential personnel through restricted areas, and issue advisories to the Nevada Trucking Association and the traveling public. NHP Troopers also responded to traffic accidents that resulted from hazardous driving conditions.
5. Nevada Department of Forestry (NDF) – NDF assigned 555 personnel to this event to assist with life/safety protection, critical infrastructure preservation and protection, home/property protection, evacuation, and cleanup efforts in impacted areas. NDF also provided technical assistance and support through their



Geospatial Information Systems capability, to track deployment of resources and damages resulting from the weather event.

6. Nevada Department of Health and Human Services (NDHHS) – NDHHS provided technical assistance to emergency managers, who helped assist residents, and to responders addressing safe drinking water issues. NDHHS also applied for and received two emergency waivers for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) to assist the Sutcliffe community in recovering from the weather related emergencies.
7. Nevada National Guard (NVNG) – NVNG provided personnel and high water trucks for transportation of responders and evacuees in the flood damaged areas, as well as heavy equipment and personnel to assist with sandbag efforts and snow removal. NVNG also provided potable water to vulnerable areas.

Federal agencies provided the following support:

1. National Weather Service (NWS) – NWS provided emergency personnel with analysis of severe storm watches and warnings.
2. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – FEMA dispatched an Incident Management Assistance Team during the response period, as well as a survey team to support damage assessment efforts during the initial recovery phase.
3. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) – BIA dispatched emergency personnel, to assist in the coordination of resources on tribal land.

Volunteer organizations provided the following support:

1. The American Red Cross (ARC) – ARC opened three shelters that provided 289 overnight stays, as well as 4,211 meals and 19,280 light meals. Additionally, the ARC provided 1,160 meals and 1,224 cases of water to the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe in Sutcliffe, Nevada. ARC volunteers assessed 517 homes and provided 51 clean-up kits.
2. Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters (VOAD) – Volunteers from the Nevada VOAD, in particular Washoe County Medical Reserve Corp and the Washoe County Sheriff's Office Citizen Corps Program, provided support to the ARC shelters, EOC operational support, operated the 211 Call Center, conducted traffic control, and ARES provided amateur radio services. Civil Air Patrol provided personnel for Emergency Support Function 9 in the State Emergency Operations Center, and flyover support for Douglas, Washoe, and Storey Counties to provide situational awareness and document damage.

## POPULATION OF AFFECTED AREAS

	County Population*	Percent of People Below Poverty Level*	Median Household Income*	Percent Elderly (65 and over)*	Percent Disabled under the age of 65*	Percent Pre-Disaster Unemployment (as of November 2016)**
Nevada Totals	2,890,845	14.7%	\$51,847	14.6%	9.0%	5.1%
Carson City	54,521	16.8%	\$47,668	16.5%	17.2%	5.3%
Douglas County	47,710	9.4%	\$58,535	25.6%	10.5%	4.9%
Humboldt County	17,019	9.4%	\$65,212	11.0%	8.3%	4.5%
Lyon County	52,585	13.8%	\$47,255	20.6%	14.6%	6.2%
Storey County	3,987	7.8%	\$64,832	29.1%	19.3%	4.9%
Washoe County	446,903	13.8%	\$52,870	15.1%	8.2%	4.2%
Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe	1,270 (service area pop.)****	33.5%^^^	\$29,722^^	10.3%****	11.2%^	44%***
Reno Sparks Indian Colony	1100 #					
Washoe Tribe of NV & CA	1116 #					
Nevada Tribal Totals	3,302 (service area pop.)****	16.5%****		8.1%****		12.6%****

Sources		
*	<a href="http://www.census.gov">www.census.gov</a>	
**	nevadaworkforce.com (Part of the Nevada Department of Employment, Training & Rehabilitation)	
***	plpt.nsn.us (Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe official website)	
****	bia.gov (2013 American Indian Population and Labor Force Report)	
^	SEX BY AGE BY DISABILITY STATUS Report - U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	These three surveys provided information from the Pyramid Lake Census County Division (CCD) on the Census Bureau's American FactFinder website
^^	MEDIAN INCOME IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS (IN 2015 INFLATION-ADJUSTED DOLLARS)U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	
^^^	POVERTY STATUS IN THE PAST 12 MONTHS U.S. Census Bureau, 2011-2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates	
#	<a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washoe_Tribe_of_Nevada_and_California">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Washoe_Tribe_of_Nevada_and_California</a>	



## TWELVE MONTH DISASTER HISTORY

**Lincoln County Bombing Incident, July 13, 2016:** A bombing incident occurred in the Town of Panaca, in Lincoln County, Nevada, that posed a severe and immediate threat to the lives and safety of visitors and residents, and caused damage to homes and property within the community. The Governor of the State of Nevada, on July 13, 2016, authorized and directed the State of Nevada to mobilize and make available all State agencies and resources necessary and requested by Lincoln County to respond to this emergency.

On July 15, 2016, the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners approved and issued a Declaration of Emergency due to the bombing incident. The State of Nevada provided a multi-agency response effort to assist Panaca and Lincoln County, which included the Division of Emergency Management, the Fire Marshal Division, the Nevada Highway Patrol Division, the Division of Investigations, the Nevada Threat Analysis Center, and the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, to coordinate and work with other local, county, State, and federal agencies.

**Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe (PLPT) Tule Wildfire, July 29, 2016:** Beginning on July 28, 2016, fires began throughout Washoe County and on Saturday, July 30, the Tule fire burned in the Sutcliffe area and community, which is located on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's Reservation. The five fires were designated as the Virginia Mountains Complex fires, and included the Rock, Anderson, Sage, Seven Lakes, and Tule fires, all of which were determined to be caused by lightning strikes. The Tule Fire on the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe's Reservation was the biggest and caused the most damage.

Officials released the following fire statistics:

- Rock Fire – 2,293 acres
- Sage Fire – 4,238 acres
- Seven Lakes Fire – 3,063 acres
- Anderson Fire – 16,284 acres
- Tule Fire – 36,142 acres

Major firefighting operations forced the closure of Pyramid Lake for recreational use, and the Lake remained closed for several days. Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe officials issued evacuation notices for Sutcliffe on the Saturday of the fire due to shifting wind patterns and the intensity of the fire, which endangered a total of approximately 350 homes and 600 residents. Tribal leadership reported that evacuations for beaches at Pyramid Lake numbered approximately 200 people.

Late Sunday afternoon, Tribal police also began conducting a mandatory evacuation of Big Canyon drainage area. The Reservation experienced several hours of power, water, and sewer service outages. State Routes 445 and 446 were shut down for several days while fire crews were suppressing the fires. Tribal officials reported on

Saturday that three mobile homes, two vehicles, and one home were destroyed. The fire also destroyed six unoccupied historic structures at the Hardscrabble Ranch. Tribal members and residents were encouraged to seek shelter at the gymnasium in Nixon, Nevada, where approximately 40 families were sheltered. Additionally cell services were lost as an AT&T cell phone tower was destroyed. On July 30, 2016, Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribal leadership declared a State of Disaster for the Reservation due to the Tule Wildfire, and on August 8, the Governor signed a Declaration of Emergency for Virginia Mountains Complex Fire, to include Washoe County and the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe.

Because this fire was on a Tribal Reservation and the Tribe has the option of going directly to FEMA, DEM requested assistance from FEMA and the Small Business Administration (SBA) to conduct a joint Federal, State, and Tribal damage assessment. It was determined that Nevada did not meet FEMA or SBA declaration criteria. SBA's criteria includes at least 25 homes (primary residences) and/or businesses if a county/reservation have uninsured losses of 40% or more of their estimated fair replacement value. A Burned Area Emergency Response (BAER) Team was also requested immediately to assist the Tribe with restoration of the burned area.

On July 29, a Fire Management Assistance Grant was granted for this fire. Eligible firefighting costs include expenses for emergency protective measures and firefighting activities such as field camps; equipment use, repair and replacement; tools, materials and supplies; and mobilization and demobilization activities. This grant provided a 75 percent federal cost share.

**Little Valley Wildfire, October 14, 2016:** The Little Valley Fire started in the Franktown Road area of Washoe Valley at 2:00 a.m. on Friday, October 14, 2016. The fire was driven by strong winds out of the southwest, at 35 mph and gusting to 70 in the hills. The Little Valley Fire spread quickly, burning a total of 2,291 acres. Embers were believed to be the cause of a secondary fire near Mt. Rose Highway, which was called the Rolling Hills Fire. The secondary fire burned 10 acres and emergency response personnel contained it within three hours. Heavy rains helped with the firefighting effort, but also caused minor flash flooding in the fire area. The Little Valley Fire was 100% contained on October 19, 2016, but firefighters continued to monitor and patrol the fire perimeter through October 31, 2016.

A total of 23 homes and 17 outbuildings were destroyed in this fire, with one home sustaining major damages. Homeowners were insured, but according to insurance adjusters on the scene many homes were under-insured. Costs estimates based on replacement costs were developed using county assessor data, and were calculated to be nearly \$4,000,000. The State's cost to activate the SBOC, deploy Satellite Communications support, and the National Guard security detail were approximately \$35,000. The costs to fight the fire have not been reported by Washoe County or state agencies at this time.

Although the community was greatly impacted by this fire it did not meet the threshold for a presidential declaration or a SBA administrative declaration. However, a request

for a Fire Management Assistance Grant was granted on October 14, 2016. Eligible firefighting costs included expenses for emergency protective measures and firefighting activities such as field camps; equipment use, repair and replacement; tools, materials and supplies; and mobilization and demobilization activities. This grant provides a 75 percent federal cost share.

The cumulative impact of these events has been devastating. Given the millions of dollars spent throughout the past 12 months to protect, repair, restore and rebuild communities, significant state, county, and city resources have been depleted. Each entity is impaired in its ability to assist and respond to the dire needs within these rural and tribal communities.

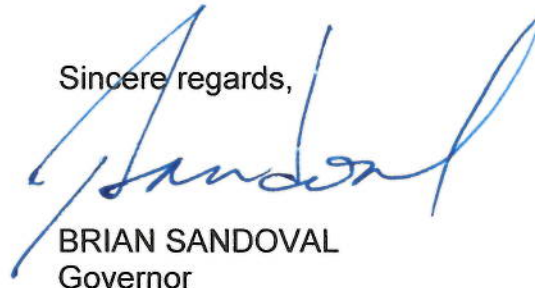
### CONCLUSION

The State of Nevada is committed to its recovery from the destruction caused by the January 2017 weather events in the counties of Washoe, Douglas, Lyon, Storey, the City of Carson City, the Reno-Sparks Indian Colony, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe, and the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California. State, local, and tribal entities have expended substantial resources in their response and need the assistance of the federal government to recover effectively and efficiently. Therefore, I respectfully request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Nevada.

Caleb Cage, the Chief of the Nevada Division of Emergency Management, has been designated as the Governor's Authorized Representative and the State Coordinating Officer for this request. Chief Cage will work with FEMA on damage assessments and will provide further information or justification if needed.

Thank you for your expedited consideration, and I look forward to your response and assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincere regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sandoval", is written over the typed name and title.

BRIAN SANDOVAL  
Governor