

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 12, 2007

The Honorable R. David Paulison
Director
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20472

Dear Director Paulison,

Yesterday marked the fifteenth anniversary of the destructive flood of 1992 in Montpelier, Vermont. We are concerned that similar circumstances are raising this threat again and that our capital city may be in danger of another flood event.

On March 11, 1992 large ice chunks carried by melt from a heavy winter's snowfall flowed down the Winooski River. These began to pile at a river's bend in the city. The water dammed and within minutes Montpelier was flooded. The water rose several feet, flooded the downtown and did not recede until the dam broke later in the evening. On this tragic day, many small businesses lost a good deal of their inventory and some never reopened. Many buildings were damaged and invaluable historical documents were lost or damaged. Final damage estimates remain near \$5 million.

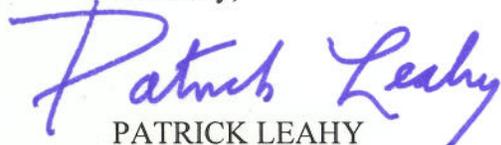
Much like late winter of 1992, the Winooski River watershed is coping with melt from a significant snow pack. Currently, the river is frozen near Montpelier, with only a small flow channel. Ice from upstream will soon break up into smaller chunks which have strong potential for damming, causing flooding in or near Montpelier.

Local merchants and homeowners, as well as state and local government agencies, are taking every possible precaution in the face of this threat, including moving inventory, drafting evacuation plans, and moving equipment. The city of Montpelier has posted evacuation and communication plans in case of quickly rising water and efforts are underway to melt the ice on the river.

We request that your agency be on alert in Montpelier, Vermont and surrounding areas and that you work closely with the Army Corps of Engineers and state and local officials to take any measures necessary to prevent a flood. Should the need arise, we urge you to respond immediately and with appropriate resources. FEMA should communicate with the public now about how it will respond in the worst case scenario.

Thank you for your immediate and diligent attention to this matter.

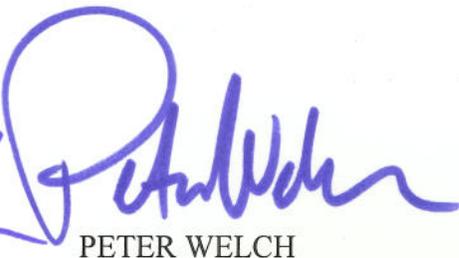
Sincerely,



PATRICK LEAHY
United States Senator



BERNARD SANDERS
United States Senator



PETER WELCH
United States Congressman