

Brian Schultz

From: Cristina Slaton
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2019 11:58 AM
To: Commissioner Correspondence
Subject: Letter from Bay County Chamber of Commerce
Attachments: Cramer Roberts Letter-Bay County-20190038-EI.pdf

Please place the attached letter in Docket Correspondence – Consumers and Representatives in Docket 20190038-EI.

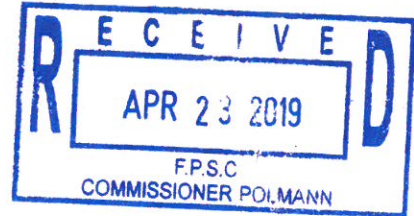
Thank you,

Cristina Slaton
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April 17, 2019

Mr. Donald Polmann
Public Service Commission
Capitol Circle Office Center
2540 Shumard Oak Boulevard
Tallahassee, FL 32399



RE: Bay County Recovery, Hurricane Michael

Dear Mr. Polmann,

We are writing to you out of increasing concern for Bay County's future. As Florida's 2019 Legislative Session nears an end, it is most imperative that Bay County's budget requests are fully funded.

The Bay County Chamber respectfully asks that you continue to keep Bay County's recovery in mind as the budget is finalized, including our schools, colleges, hospitals and local governments.

All Floridians live within close proximity to the coastline. Recent years have shown an upturn of severe weather. Bay County has always supported recovery efforts throughout the state and will continue to support, but we must not be forgotten.

Clean-up since the storm has been continuous and around the clock for the past six months. We have diligently worked every day to get to where we are now. From individual citizens, businesses, local governments and contractors, clean up and recovery efforts continue. This has resulted in more debris removal than any other disaster in U.S. history. To date, there has been 17 million cubic yards of debris removal for Bay County alone. For comparison, Hurricane Irma resulted in 2 million cubic yards of debris statewide.

We have seen the initial impacts of businesses closing their doors due to unrecoverable damage, their employees moving away from the area due to job loss and lack of housing inventory. That was the initial blow. The trickledown effect has continued, and continues to push on without a foreseeable end in sight. Our economy, infrastructure, and civic infrastructure is rapidly reaching that dreaded tipping point.

Most have seen images of the devastation to Tyndall Air Force Base. Tyndall was home to the world's largest squadron of F-22's. Although this mission has been realigned, we are looking forward to two additional missions, the MQ-9 Reaper and the F-35 squadrons. However, the

community's infrastructure must be in place before we can support the populations that these missions will bring.

Bay County was a vibrantly growing community experiencing positive new development and redevelopment until the storm hit on October 10. We all have the desire to recover. Collaboration between religious, non-profit, government and business has been profound; but using today's population as a guide for funding will not suffice. People are returning to their homes as they are repaired, every day.

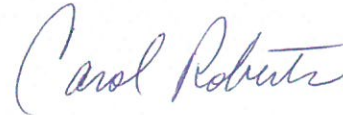
We are very grateful for all the support we have received, but the time has come to wholeheartedly ask for your support to fully fund Bay County's budget requests. This area is particularly mindful of taxpayer dollars and we fully support them in their requests. It is very unfortunate that disasters take their toll in Florida. We must all support each other, or there will be no Florida, as we know it, left to call home or visit.

You are always welcome to our community, please do not hesitate to let us know if you would like to schedule a visit. Thank you for your continued support and keeping our recovery top of mind.

Sincerely,



Will Cramer, Chairman of the Board

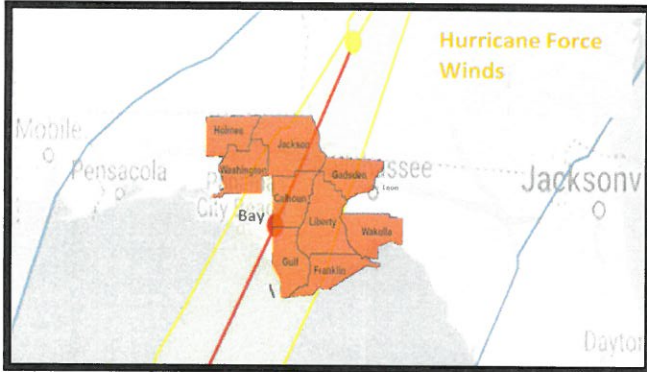


Carol Roberts, President/CEO

Enclosures: Bay County Hurricane Michael Fact Sheet
Bay District Schools Hurricane Michael Operational Funding Impact/Needs

CC: The Honorable Marco Rubio, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Rick Scott, U.S. Senate
The Honorable Neal Dunn, M.D., U.S. Congress, FL District 2
The Honorable George Gainer, Florida Senate, District 2
The Honorable Jay Trumbull, Florida House of Representatives, District 6
All members of the Florida Senate
All members of the Florida House of Representatives

Hurricane Michael – October 10, 2018



Fiscally Constrained Counties (marked in orange) receive **100%** federal reimbursement post-storm.

Bay County was the hardest hit by Hurricane Michael and is the **only** county in the impact area that **does not qualify** for 100% reimbursement.

Where a storm hits can be just as impactful as the strength of the storm...

County/Storm	Annual Budget	Storm Impact per capita
Miami Dade County/ Hurricane Irma	\$7.4 billion	\$135
Bay County/ Hurricane Michael	\$362.2 million	\$3,647

Bay County Activities to Date:

- Removed more than 8.5 million cubic yards of debris in unincorporated Bay County. More than 15.5 million cubic yards has been removed countywide (compared to the 2 million collected statewide during Irma)
- Received 45 days of 100-percent debris removal reimbursement, which will cover approximately \$85 million of an estimated \$350 million total cost of debris removal
- Have borrowed -- so far -- \$250 million to pay vendors with un-reimbursable interest of just over 3 percent after three years

Total Estimated Bay County Damage – \$661 million

Bay County was forever changed by the magnitude of destruction brought by Hurricane Michael. As the population center of the region and ground zero for the storm's landfall, Bay County residents experienced the worst impacts of the **near category-five storm** and the fallout continues today:

- 25 deaths in Bay County
- 17 million cubic yards of debris in Bay County (out of the estimated 20 million cubic yards total across the impact zone)
- Estimated 20,000 residents were homeless immediately post-storm
- 13 percent of Bay County students never returned post-storm
- Three schools closed by county post-storm
- 69 percent of residential homes in Panama City alone were damaged
- Bay Medical Center forced to shrink to one quarter its previous size
- Panama City Mall closed
- More than 33,000 applicants for FEMA assistance in Bay County were denied
- \$3 billion in timber losses





Hurricane Michael Operational Funding Impact/Needs

3,679	Number of students who no longer attend BDS post hurricane
\$12.4 MILLION	Lost revenue from 18/19 as a result of decreased enrollment
\$24.8 MILLION	Anticipated lost revenue for 19/20 as a result of decreased enrollment

What the district has done so far:

Close schools	Institute a district-wide spending freeze
Decrease employees by 228 due to attrition post storm	Consolidate schools

We've asked for \$12.4 million for THIS school year and that's pending in Senate Bill 520

If we get the \$12.4 million for 18/19 but don't get the \$24.8 million for 19/20:

The Board will have to implement a reduction in force that will eliminate the jobs of 514 employees

Our community is NOT getting what it deserves from those who can help us!

- * Two weeks after Hurricane Harvey, President Trump signed off on **\$22 BILLION** in FEMA funding
- * **SIX MONTHS** after Hurricane Michael, a **\$13.5 BILLION** deal remains in limbo in Congress
- * To date, our ENTIRE state received only **\$957 MILLION** in federal grants, loans & insurance payments
- * The Red Cross received **\$522 MILLION** in donations for Harvey but only **\$35 MILLION** for Michael

We have done everything possible to streamline and save expenses while maintaining a stable workforce with the anticipation that the government would help us as needed.

We can no longer sustain this juggling act and, without additional state funding ASAP, are left making difficult decisions which will have long-term impacts on the recovery of Bay County.

We are currently the largest employer in this community and, therefore, offer financial stability to thousands of families. We know that a strong educational system is the hallmark of a flourishing community and we want to ensure that we have the financial stability to continue.

Tallahassee: Don't fail us now!

Please contact the decision makers and ask for their support for Senate Bill 520 (the **\$12.4 million** for 18/19) and for a bi-partisan effort to provide stable funding, based upon pre-storm enrollment, for Bay District Schools for the 19/20 school year. Our recovery, and ability to take care of our students and employees the way we need to do so, depends upon YOUR involvement.

Please call or email the decision makers today!