

TOM EMMER
6TH DISTRICT, MINNESOTA

315 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-2331

COMMITTEES
FINANCIAL SERVICES
SUBCOMMITTEES
INVESTOR PROTECTION,
ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND
CAPITAL MARKETS

NATIONAL SECURITY, INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT AND MONETARY POLICY

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2306

DISTRICT OFFICE
9201 QUADAY AVENUE NE
SUITE 206
OTSEGO, MN 55330
(763) 241-6848

HOUSE REPUBLICAN STEERING

REPUBLICAN WHIP TEAM

DEPUTY WHIP TEAM

July 9, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 205000

Dear Mr. President:

On July 2, 2020, the State of Minnesota requested a major disaster declaration be made under Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207) following “extensive fire damage to public infrastructure caused by civil unrest” between May 27 and June 3, 2020. Now that federal assistance has been requested, I ask that your Administration undertake a thorough and concurrent review of my state’s response to the violence and provide recommendations so every Governor, Mayor, and local official can learn from our experiences and ensure appropriate plans are in place to prevent something like this from ever happening again.

The murder of George Floyd on May 25 sparked protests and demonstrations in cities around the country. Many of these gatherings were peaceful. However, thousands of businesses in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul were damaged, looted, and destroyed by criminals and opportunists. This is in addition to the extensive destruction of public facilities and infrastructure, including the Minneapolis Police Department’s Third Precinct, which the city chose to abandon.

Current damage estimates are now five times their original projections, but the extent of the destruction cannot be calculated solely in dollars and cents. Thousands of livelihoods have been permanently disrupted, future economic development plans have been derailed as businesses reconsider investing in and around the Twin Cities, and numerous public lifelines for the community have been cut leaving Minnesotans searching for alternative means of care for their families.

To date, there has been no federal analysis of the actions that were – or were not - taken by local and state officials to prevent one of the most destructive episodes of civil unrest in our nation’s history. Various news reports point to inexperience¹, miscommunication², and perfect storm of

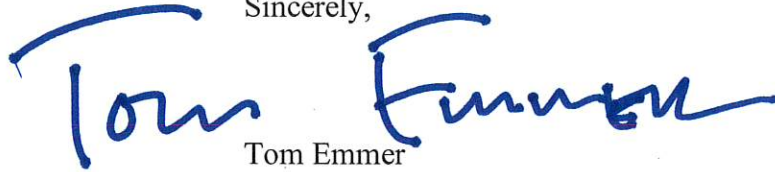
¹ Stockman, Farah. “They Have Lost Control’: Why Minneapolis Burned,” July 3, 2020.
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/07/03/us/minneapolis-government-george-floyd.html>.

² Bierschbach, Briana. “Gov. Tim Walz Laments ‘Abject Failure’ of Riot Response,” May 30, 2020.
<https://www.startribune.com/gov-tim-walz-laments-abject-failure-of-riot-response/570864092/>.

no-win scenarios³ as the culprit that allowed these events to spiral out of control. Absent a full and complete investigation accompanied by recommendations on how to appropriately respond, similar events are bound to occur in the future.

Minnesota, like so many cities around our great nation, has a long road to recovery ahead. However, if the federal government is expected to assist in the clean-up of these unfortunate weeks, it has an obligation to every American – prior to the release of funding - to fully understand the events which allowed for this level of destruction to occur and ensure it never happens again.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom Emmer". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping "T" and "E".

Tom Emmer
Member of Congress

Cc: Honorable Chad F. Wolf, Acting Secretary of Homeland Security; Honorable Peter T. Gaynor, Federal Emergency Management Agency Administrator; Honorable William Barr, Attorney General of the United States; Governor Tim Walz

³ See Stockman.