

The Corporation of the
MUNICIPALITY OF TWEED

255 Metcalf St., Postal Bag 729
Tweed, ON K0K 3J0
Tel.: (613) 478-2535
Fax: (613) 478-6457



Email: info@tweed.ca
Website: www.tweed.ca
facebook.com/tweedontario

July 15, 2024

The Hon. Harjit S. Sajjan, PC OMM MSM CD MP
President of the King's Privy Council for Canada and
Minister of Emergency Preparedness and
Minister responsible for the Pacific Economic Development Agency of Canada
80 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A3

Dear Minister Sajjan:

This letter is in response to your letter dated April 3, 2024 which was in response to my letter dated August 13, 2023 re reimbursement for some of the July 24, 2022 EF2 tornado costs incurred by the residents of the Municipality of Tweed.

I have taken this time to talk to various residents still reeling from the impact of that tornado which ripped through the northern part of our community. Needless to say your response was a great disappointment but not unexpected from a government that continues to ignore the needs and aspirations of small rural Ontario.

Initially the provincial government turned their back on the residents in my community. However, over time with much lobbying and with media help, they came around and provided some assistance. Our campaign secured \$5.5 million dollars for those impacted by severe weather events in Ontario. The Municipality of Tweed received \$1.2 million. This Council and the Municipality of Tweed are grateful for the support of the provincial government. We struggle as to why the federal government continues to shirk its responsibility to help its own citizens.

I am not sure if you have been informed of the history on how our plea for help made it to your desk.

I had been in touch with MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman and she advised me that the Ministry of Public Safety would be contacting me to discuss our concerns. This was in response to my letter sent to MP Kramp-Neuman dated April 17th. Her letter of May 1st initially directed me to Minister Mendicino, Emergency Preparedness, and subsequently redirected to Minister Blair, Public Safety. On the evening of May 16th MP Kramp-Neuman briefed me on her meeting with Public Safety. She noted that the meeting went well, there was definite interest with wanting to help but she was not sure how far they would go. I immediately sent Minister Blair further information on

the impacts of the tornado including our ROMA delegation report to the Ministry of Natural Resources & Forestry as well as a link to the tornado bin on our website.

In June, I had a productive meeting with Andrew Green, Ontario Regional Advisor & Pavan Sapra, Senior Policy Advisor who oversees the Federal Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements Program (DFAA); (the program you reference in your April 2nd letter). Mr. Green and Mr. Sapra apprised me of the formula the Federal Government uses to determine how much cost the Province must incur before submitting a claim to the Federal Government. The formula is based on population and it does not work in Ontario's favour. Before asking for assistance from the Federal Government, the Province must incur expenses of \$55 million/disaster.

I advised Mr. Green and Mr. Sapra that we have tens of thousands of trees down, residents have incurred significant financial costs in cleaning up their properties, and many continue to suffer mentally experiencing PTSD. I also shared that some are living under an impending threat of potential forest fires as well as spring flooding due to downed trees in our rivers.

I apprised Mr. Green and Mr. Sapra of how the provincial \$1.2 million derecho/tornado funds were allocated by Municipality. I noted that these funds would not have been forthcoming if it were not for the persistence of the those impacted by the tornado, Tweed Municipal Council and the support of the media who kept this disaster on the front burner.

Mr. Green and Mr. Sapra had proposed that we reach out to residents and have them submit clean-up costs related to clearing debris from their lane ways - from the road up to the home, for "consideration" by DFAA. The catch was they made no guarantee that funding would be forthcoming. Nonetheless, I was optimistic that there will be some level of success in our bid for additional assistance.

After many months and no follow-up nor response to my emails, I finally heard from Adam Greche who apparently was now in charge of our file. Adam tried to get us the help we needed but at the end of the day we learned that our concerted effort was pointless.

That is the history of our claim. In your April 2, 2024 letter you note that "Provinces and Territories are responsible for the design and delivery of financial assistance to those who are affected. In turn, Public Safety Canada administers the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA) program on behalf of the Government of Canada." We were advised of how the program works by both Mr. Green and Mr. Sapra before we began this process. They were going to see if there was any way that the government would be able to provide assistance. From your letter, coupled with a lack of response to my follow-up emails, we cannot help by ascertain that there was never an intent to provide financial assistance. It is our perception that the government of Canada was expecting residents not to put in the effort to

compile their out of pocket expenses. This would be a great deal of effort on behalf of the residents and the municipality to compile the information. We delivered....you didn't.

I am a firm believer that it is our duty to provide financial support to foreign countries in times of need or disaster. However, it is not hard to understand why many Canadians are opposed to foreign aid especially when you consider that their own government turns a blind eye to their need for assistance for similar events.

Minister Sajjan, we are hoping that you will reconsider your initial assessment and do the right thing which is to help the residents of the Municipality of Tweed.

I will be attending the AMO Conference in Ottawa from August 17-21. I will make myself available at any time to continue this discussion. If you are not available during AMO, then please tell me when we can meet. I will come to Ottawa because this conversation deserves a face to face meeting.

Yours truly,



Don DeGenova
Mayor
Municipality of Tweed
255 Metcalf St.
Tweed ON K0K 3J0

613-478-2535
mayor@tweed.ca

cc. Prime Minister Trudeau
MP Shelby Kramp-Neuman