



**FEMA**

February 24, 2023

The Honorable Roberta Latta  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. Latta:

Thank you for your joint letter of February 16, 2023, to Administrator Criswell. Your letter was forwarded to me for a response as I am charged with delivering FEMA's programs in the state of Ohio. We share your concern at the impact to the residents and the environment of the derailment of Norfolk Southern's train in East Palestine on February 3, 2023. Our FEMA team is aware that this is a difficult time for many residents in the impacted communities.

I want to reassure you that FEMA has not denied the state of Ohio any assistance. FEMA was closely monitoring the situation since the incident occurred via our regional and national watch centers and in close contact with our partners at Ohio Emergency Management Agency (OEMA). As a result of our ongoing conversations with the state, and a direct result of conversations between Governor DeWine and FEMA Administrator Criswell, FEMA started deploying personnel and resources to East Palestine on Friday, February 17, to support the coordinated multi-agency effort.

Using our own authority, we deployed a Senior FEMA Official, elements of our Region 5 Incident Management Assistance Team (IMAT), and full-time staff from the region and headquarters. I have also personally been in East Palestine this week meeting with federal, state, and local officials. We are providing support in the areas of operational coordination, unity of effort, and logistical planning. Most recently, we deployed two Mobile Emergency Operational Vehicles (MEOV) to provide additional workspace and communications capacity and to serve as a Joint Information Center (JIC).

As the operation evolves, FEMA will focus on supporting the planning and situational awareness processes to ensure an effective incident management structure and the agency will continue its conversations with the state about possible future needs.

Thank you again for your letter. The co-signers on your letter will receive an identical response. Should you have additional questions or require any assistance, please have a member of your staff contact me or Dan Shulman, Senior External Affairs Specialist, at (312) 408-4427.

I look forward to building a strong partnership with you and your staff.

Sincerely,

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Thomas C. Sivak  
Regional Administrator