

(Mrs. CLAYTON) and I share. Thirty of the public service people in Rocky Mount were out helping others. They had no home to go home to. They were out helping.

Same thing was true in Tarboro yesterday. Two business people, Bob Barnhill who owns a construction company, and Steve Woodsworth, who has another business, they were there providing food and shelter and helping seniors, moving them out in Tarboro out of the Arbermal building when their homes had water in them. But they were there helping.

People of North Carolina have responded, but we still have a long way to go before we are through this. As the gentlewoman said, people are in shelters, are going to be there for several more days before they can even go to temporary quarters.

Mrs. CLAYTON. Mr. Speaker, let me just read a couple of statements that I have, because the pictures reflect that.

In the driving wind and rain last Thursday morning, Mr. Ben Mayo attempted to save his family. Concerned by the rapid rise of the river, he ushered his family of four out of bed and loaded them into a small boat. Reaching out to his neighbors, he also loaded eight of them into the same small boat. The boat capsized. Six of the persons from the boat were able to reach higher ground.

But Mr. Ben Mayo, his wife, his daughter, and granddaughter, Teshika Vines, were swept away by the raging waters.

I had a picture of her because the picture came in our local paper, right, on her horse.

Mr. Mayo's body was later found stuck in a drain pipe. But little Teshika, shown here on a pony, has yet to be found.

The water, an element that we all rely upon to preserve life took a life away.

In North Carolina, we are facing the worst natural disaster in the history of our State.

But like all of my colleagues have said, this traumatic and devastating story is replaying itself over and over. But conversely to that, people's generosity, if there is anything redemptive about this taking of life and this disaster, it is the generosity of people coming together, the governments working together to make that.

We want to convey that we in North Carolina want to join with our colleagues in Maryland or New Jersey or New York who also were devastated by this, and that we do need to craft a bill that would be responsive in a comprehensive way so that we can not only take care of the disaster in terms of the housing and the business but also the health needs that are just so traumatic.

We do not even begin to understand what it means to have more than a million chickens in the water, more than 100,000 hogs, horse farms, goat farms, all of these. I was in Wilson and

the Department of Health director warning people about the water, but also warning people about the rodents and the snakes, the mosquitos that we will have happen and the disease.

So we are in for a long haul. What we want to commend people for is their generosity, but we also want to encourage their patience, because it will take patience with people working together. We want to push our governments to be as responsive as possible. But we know we cannot restore them as quickly. So temporary housing is needed.

Mr. Speaker, in the driving wind and rain last Thursday morning, Mr. Ben Mayo attempted to save his family. Concerned by the rapid rise of the river, he ushered his family of four out of bed and loaded them into a small boat.

Reaching out to his neighbors, he also loaded eight of them into that same small boat. The boat capsized. Six of the persons from the boat were able to reach higher ground. But, Ben Mayo, his wife, his daughter and granddaughter, Teshika Vines, were swept away by the raging waters.

Mr. Mayo's body was later found, stuck in a drainpipe. Little Teshika, shown here on a pony, has yet to be found.

The water, an element that we all rely upon to preserve life, took her life away. In North Carolina we are facing the worst natural disaster in the history of our state.

The winds and water of Hurricane Floyd hit land some days ago, and have left a swath of death and destruction and despair, unprecedented in North Carolina history. Towns have become rivers, and rivers have become towns. Thirty-six are known dead. Many more are unaccounted for, still missing.

A State of Emergency has been declared in 26 counties, and the President has issued a disaster declaration for 60 counties. The Tar, Neuse, Cape Fear and Lumber Rivers are all above the flood stage.

Thousands of homes remain underwater. Evacuation orders were issued in seven counties. More than 300 roads, in 43 counties are closed, and that's down from the original 500 that were closed.

Power remains out in nearly 50,000 households, down from the 1.5 million who were initially without electricity. Water and sewer systems are in disrepair. Shelters are housing thousands of citizens.

One hundred thousand hogs have been lost, 2.4 million chickens and 500,000 turkeys. Disease and contamination is a real and dangerous threat as animal carcasses clutter the roads.

Coffins, dredged up by the flooding, have been seen floating in Goldsboro and Wilson. According to the Charlotte Observer, Floyd is the worst flood in North Carolina, in 500 years.

Rivers have become towns. Towns have become rivers. Yet, among all of this tragedy, there are bright spots.

The President has released another \$528 million to FEMA, to address immediate needs. And, we appreciate the efforts of FEMA to provide "Meals Ready to Eat," Ice, blankets, water and emergency generators.

We also appreciate the hundreds of individuals, on the ground, who are helping out. The Red Cross has opened 49 shelters. The Salvation Army has 31 mobile kitchens. Yet, much more help and support will be needed.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, I intend to join with Members of Congress from other impacted states to try to send a legislative package for further relief to the President for signing.

As part of that package, we need to update the law so that farmers can be treated on equal footing with other families and businesses. We will also need more resources, and that will also be a part of the legislative package.

The people of North Carolina are resilient, and we will bounce back from this situation. But, we will need the help of all Americans.

The winds will go, the rain will go, the rivers will crest, the clean-up will begin and the restoration will take place. The spirit of North Carolina will return, Mr. Speaker, with your help and the help of our colleagues.

HURRICANE FLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. ROTHMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, first allow me to convey my sincerest condolences and sympathies to the people of North Carolina. This has been such a terrible natural disaster, unprecedented in anyone's memory. I can only imagine the suffering that the people of North Carolina have already experienced and what lies ahead for them. Our prayers are with my colleagues and the people they represent, and we will do our part here in this body to assist my colleagues in assisting them.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a little bit about the effect of Floyd's fury that was felt in my State of New Jersey. We are now in the process of rebuilding our lives in the Garden State, lives that almost without exception were touched by Floyd.

In my district alone, it was not just the people who live near bodies of water. Virtually every single body of water, whether it was a lake or a stream or river overflowed its banks in unprecedented ways. There are countless tens of thousands of homes all through my district where basements were flooded, first levels were flooded, no, not much loss of life, thank God, but tremendous suffering, heartache, loss of worldly possessions, yes, but thank goodness not much loss of life.

But our people will be spending a great many weeks and months rebuilding their lives as they try to come to terms with what happened in the wake of Floyd.

I will tell my colleagues what they say the amount of damage in New Jersey just in northern New Jersey alone, \$500 million worth of damage.

In addition to the flooding of the homes and businesses and towns washed out, phone service was out. In my neck of the woods in northern New Jersey, a million people were without phone service beyond just their own little towns, more than a million people. Thirty-five thousand people had no phone service whatsoever.

There was no wireless cell phone service which we rely on a great deal in

northern New Jersey, no fax machines, no ATM machines.

Now my colleagues can say, well, why did this happen. We had families who were unable to check in on their loved ones, whether children checking in on their parents or vice versa if they lived out of town. We had patients unable to find their doctors, doctors unable to reach their patients. We had businesses unable to communicate with their customers, the customers with their businesses, suppliers with businesses.

How could this have happened? Well, I have asked that we undertake a Federal inquiry into how a vital industry, a vital utility such as the phone company, could have permitted or how they handled in fact Floyd's aftermath with so many million people and more without phone service for 3, 4, 5 days.

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Tens of millions of dollars were lost in terms of business alone, notwithstanding all of the heartache and emotional isolation felt by so many in my communities.

Well, the switching facility is apparently located near a body of water that had flooded and overflowed its banks in 1977. We are going to learn more about the details, but it is critical that in the year 1999 we find out why there was no redundancy, no duplication of switching devices, which would have prevented all together this tremendous lack of telephone service and the lack of disruption and damage to people's lives and businesses.

I am meeting with representatives from the phone company tomorrow. And we have a great many dedicated men and women who work for the telephone companies who did their utmost to prevent disruption, but I am afraid that there may need to be a new way of thinking on behalf of those planning for the worst. Y2K, the year 2000, is coming upon us. There are always the potentialities for accidents or, God forbid, terrorist incidents. If we are not prepared in the metropolitan area of New York and New Jersey for these kinds of disasters, natural and human-kind, what can we look forward to around the country? That is why we are conducting a federal investigation and will hold hearings on what could have been done to prevent that kind of tragedy.

As my time runs out, I just want to say to the people of New Jersey that we are fighting here in Congress for them, and I ask my colleagues to join me.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to proceed for an additional minute.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. ADERHOLT). The Chair is unable to recognize that request.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. SISISKY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. SISISKY. Mr. Speaker, I commend my friend, Congresswoman CLAYTON, for taking time to discuss these terrible floods.

I saw her on television with the President when they visited some of the devastated areas in North Carolina.

Late last week, I visited southeast Virginia with our Governor, where we witnessed identical devastation.

I have to confess, I've never seen anything like it. To be faced with back-to-back drought and flood is simply overwhelming.

But our job is to see that these rural areas, communities, families, and businesses are not overwhelmed.

That is going to be a very big job.

Most of the rivers in and along my district are either right at flood stage or significantly over.

The upper Nottaway River was just below flood stage at Rawlings.

But by the time it got to the town of Stony Creek, 25 miles away, it was twelve feet above flood stage.

West of Petersburg, in Matoaca, the Appomattox was holding steady right at flood stage.

The Meherrin River was right at flood stage in Lawrenceville, but over two feet above flood stage by the time it got to Emporia.

I think most of you have seen news reports from Franklin, in the center of my district, where the Blackwater River crested about sixteen feet over flood stage and left most of the city completely under water.

And the effects of this flood have hurt communities like Portsmouth in ways that defy description.

Thankfully, the water is back on, and the same goes for communities in the Petersburg area.

With all this flood water spilling into water treatment facilities, not only were we warned to boil water, Portsmouth was warned to not drink the water even if it was boiled.

I think all of you know, it's one thing to lose electricity. That's bad enough.

But it's a whole different animal to lose your water over an extended period of time.

And in addition to electricity and water, we lost many major highways. Well over two hundred roads, along with interstates, were closed across southside Virginia.

And they stayed that way over the weekend as we waited for rivers and streams to crest, and then subside, so crews could remove debris.

Interstates 64 and 95 were closed, preventing travel to Hampton Roads and North Carolina.

The major highway across my district, U.S. 460, was under several feet of water in several locations.

Interstate 264 was open around Portsmouth, but with some ramps closed due to flood water.

Even highways that are open, like U.S. Routes 13 and 17, were closed at the Carolina border.

And in counties and communities where you can at least get around: Suffolk, Surry, Sussex, Southampton and Greenville, traffic was limited so cleanup crews could get in to make essential repairs.

Many streets in Chesapeake are still flooded.

I'm not going to belabor this any more—but as of today, the Internet list of closed roads is five pages long.

On top of that, we've got phone systems out and simply can't always call, even to check on loved ones.

That brings me to one thing I've got to say: Thank you and God bless all the emergency workers, from the Federal Emergency Management Agency folks and other Federal employees, to the State agencies, especially the National Guard—from the logistics operations to the helicopter pilots, and the VA Department of Transportation, to the local sheriffs and police and fire departments and rescue squads.

And I would also be remiss not to mention Red Cross and the hundreds of volunteers working with them and similar organizations.

I'm afraid we sometimes take these people for granted, but I doubt that anyone in Southside or North Carolina will ever make that mistake again.

Mr. Speaker, if the rain ever stops, we'll need to think about the future.

Drying out and restoring homes and communities will take time and a lot of hard work.

If the Federal, State and local partnership we've seen in the face of this emergency continues over the long term, we'll be in good shape.

One thing we need to do is make sure that in addition to the families, homeowners and businesses in our cities and towns, we remember the devastation this inflicts on rural areas and farmers and agribusiness.

It is my understanding that a Presidential Disaster Declaration carries far more weight than a Secretarial Declaration.

And I'm talking USDA, not FEMA.

I have already contacted the White House to request that areas affected by these floods receive all Federal assistance possible.

If that means we need a full-scale Presidential Disaster Declaration from USDA, that's what I want.

After the President went down there yesterday, I'm sure they would have done that anyway.

But this thing is just so big, so unbelievable, we need to do all we can to help these people get back on their feet.

As I said, this will take a lot of work over a long period of time, but now is the time to begin.

HURRICANE FLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOLT. Mr. Speaker, I would be happy to yield a moment to my colleague from New Jersey if he has more to add.

Mr. ROTHMAN. Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend and colleague, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. HOLT).

I just wanted to say that we have people without drinking water who must boil their drinking water and still people without power or phone service. So this is, as my colleague knows, because he has spent so much time over the last few days working on this, this is a real tragedy. The local people, the police, fire, ambulance, emergency services, the people in the power companies and phone companies have done their best to rally.

Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for the time. Together, we in Congress can help these people and rebuild our communities.