

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 15, 2024

Isabel Guzman
Administrator
U.S. Small Business Administration
409 3rd Street, SW
Washington, DC 20416

Administrator Isabel Guzman,

In the aftermath of Hurricanes Helene and Milton, the residents and businesses on the west coast of Florida have been diligently working on rebuilding their lives and livelihoods as quickly as possible.

As you know, the Small Business Administration (SBA) requires Physical Damage reporting in order for impacted parties to be eligible for an SBA Disaster Assistance loan. Unfortunately, the back-to-back natural disasters have caused unique problems that have substantially slowed the ability to quickly assess damage in Pasco County, Florida. Damage assessments from Hurricane Helene have proven difficult because of flooding, and the displacement of many home and business owners. Timelines were further delayed as assessors were halted in preparation for Hurricane Milton. To make matters worse, the damages from Hurricane Milton are still ongoing, as many areas are still underwater due to fluvial flooding, leaving many homeowners still displaced.

We have remained in regular contact with Pasco County officials, and it is clear that the County is working as diligently as possible to get damage assessment reports as quickly, safely, and accurately as possible. However, it is becoming clear, through no fault of their own, that the County may not meet the Physical Damage assessment deadlines as currently outlined by SBA. Specifically, SBA has set the following application dates for Pasco County:

Hurricane Helene:

Physical damage open until November 27, 2024

Economic injury open until June 30, 2025

Hurricane Milton:

Physical damage open until December 10, 2024

Economic injury open until July 11, 2025

With the deadlines quickly approaching, we request that SBA consider extending the physical damage deadlines by 30 days for both hurricanes. At this time, Pasco County is confident that it would be able to complete the necessary assessments within that extended timeframe.

In light of the catastrophe that has befallen central Florida, we should continue to remain flexible, where authorized, to relieve some of the burdens our localities face as they regain a sense of normalcy.

Thank you for your consideration.



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



Laurel Lee
Member of Congress