December 28, 1955

Hon. William F. Knowland
United States Senate
Washington 25, D.C.

Dear Senator Knowland:

I have been distressed to read of the recent disastrous floods in your State and wish to express my deep concern for the hardship and suffering of your people.

My concern is increased by the fact that in recent months I have conducted hearings of the Senate Banking and Currency Committee in Eastern states which were stricken by similar disasters earlier this year. Testimony which we received from people of the States of New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, and North and South Carolina have refreshed our recollections of the disastrous loss of life and property which these catastrophies can cause.

I have been convinced of the need for a Federal program of disaster insurance which would, to some extent, decrease the financial impact of such disasters as your people have suffered, and help to rehabilitate their homes, farms and business establishments. As I have said, hearings on proposals to create such a program were held under my chairmanship in October, November and December in the Eastern states, and I expect the committee will resume them in Washington very shortly after Congress reconvenes. A study of the problem has been prepared by the staff of the committee, and I am sending you, under separate cover, a copy for your information. I am also sending you copies of various bills on this subject, which have not been formally introduced, because they are all tentative, but which have been before our committee for purposes of study and comment. The earlier hearings are now being printed and will be available shortly. We shall be glad to send you copies if you desire them.

As Chairman of the subcommittee which will consider the legislation, I should be glad to have your suggestions, advice and reactions to the various legislative proposals, as well as any information you may be able to furnish which you believe would be helpful to us in considering the problem.

Sincerely yours,

Herbert H. Lehman