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Webb to FEMA: Why was Virginia denied earthquake relief?

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Sen. Jim Webb, D-Va., is calling on the Federal Emergency Management Agency to explain why it denied funding for earthquake damage in Louisa County.

In a letter Wednesday to FEMA Administrator W. Craig Fugate, Webb asked the agency to help identify ways to strengthen the state's appeal. Gov. Bob McDonnell will ask FEMA to take a second look at Virginia's request for funding to aid relief efforts from August's 5.8-magnitude quake.

"Louisa County has documented close to 1,000 damaged homes, including a number of homes that were completely destroyed. The quake caused structural damage to churches, schools, and even caused the shutdown of nuclear power stations in North Anna," Webb said in his letter. "More troubling, is the fact that the overwhelming majority of residents in this rural community lack adequate earthquake insurance protection, necessitating government assistance in a time of great need."

Webb's letter also asked for a breakdown of why the funding was denied and a list of alternative funding mechanisms available through FEMA and other federal agencies that could provide aid.

McDonnell and President Obama discussed the FEMA denial Wednesday during a 10-minute conversation before the president's speech at Joint Base Langley-Eustis in Hampton. After the appearance, McDonnell did not indicate whether he persuaded Obama.

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