



## GOVERNOR JOSH SHAPIRO

June 27, 2023

Kem Fleming, Director  
U.S. Small Business Administration  
Office of Disaster Assistance  
Field Operations Center East  
101 Marietta Street NW, Suite 700  
Atlanta, GA 30303-2725

Dear Mr. Fleming:

Under the provisions of Title 13 C.F.R. Part 123.3, I respectfully request that the Administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) implement a Small Business Administration declaration to provide assistance in the form of SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans for Berks County, Pennsylvania, following the explosion at the R.M. Palmer Company factory building in West Reading Borough, Berks County, on March 24, 2023.

When the explosion occurred, it destroyed the R.M. Palmer Chocolate Factory building. In addition, the explosion damaged another building, which housed five businesses, to such a degree that caused the building to be condemned. Another building in the area that houses two businesses suffered damage to its structure as a result of the explosion.

The Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency conducted sample surveys of the affected businesses to determine the economic impact of the resultant losses. Based upon these surveys, I certify that at least five small businesses in the disaster area have suffered substantial economic injury as a result of the disaster and are in need of financial assistance not otherwise available on reasonable terms.

Sincerely,

Governor Josh Shapiro