

GERALD R. FORD, JR.  
FIFTH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

WASHINGTON, D. C., ADDRESS:  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, ADDRESS:  
318 MICHIGAN TRUST BUILDING

RALPH B. PRATT  
SECRETARY

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

*Maguire*

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, D. C.

August 17, 1949

Honorable John R. Steelman  
Assistant to the President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Steelman:

On August 11, 1949 a joint meeting of labor and management representatives, public officials and interested citizens was held in the city of Grand Haven, Michigan. After a thorough review of the unemployment conditions in the community, it was determined that action should be taken to have Grand Haven designated as a distress area.

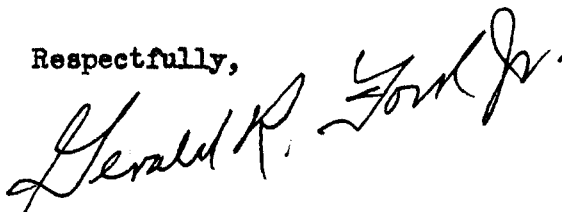
A few weeks ago Muskegon, Michigan was determined to be in a critical situation economically speaking. Grand Haven is only twelve miles south of Muskegon and the industrial activities of both communities are closely related. Consequently, if Muskegon is adversely affected from an employment point of view, Grand Haven immediately and directly feels the impact and, conversely, favorable employment conditions in Grand Haven help to alleviate the unemployment problems in Muskegon.

The Michigan Unemployment Compensation Commission in September, 1948 reported only 90 compensable claims in the Grand Haven area. For the next eight consecutive months the claims mounted steadily. At the present time 526 individuals are unemployed in the area, of which 68% are from Grand Haven proper, 21% from Muskegon, 6% from Grand Rapids, and 5% from Fruitport, a town approximately midway between Muskegon and Grand Haven. A total unemployed force of 526 in a city the size of Grand Haven has created an extremely serious situation, particularly with the added effects of Muskegon's dire economic condition just a few miles away. I believe that a thorough investigation of the problem will reveal that the unemployment exceeds 12% of the labor force.

To date nine distress areas have been selected, including Muskegon. It seems to me that Grand Haven should be included within the Muskegon area because of its close geographical proximity and the direct relationship of the two communities industrially. I have noted that in the New Bedford, Massachusetts area nine communities in the immediate vicinity were included as a unit for federal assistance purposes. Providence, Rhode Island has also been so designated as an acute area and the entire state has been included. In the case of Waterbury, Connecticut, eleven nearby towns are considered in the same category. I only cite the above to indicate past precedents for the expansion of an acute area beyond the territorial limits of a particular community.

On the basis of the above facts I urgently request that an immediate investigation be made to determine if Grand Haven can be designated as a distress area so that it may qualify for all federal assistance in these critical times. The citizens of that community and I will be indebted to you for aid in this important matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Gerald R. Ford, Jr." The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name below it.

Gerald R. Ford, Jr.

GRFJr:bb