Late yesterday, North Carolina Governor Pat McCrory sent a letter to the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) requesting a disaster declaration for residents and business owners in Watauga County who suffered uninsured damage from the severe thunderstorms and flooding that stuck January 30. If approved, homeowners, renters and business owners could qualify for low-interest loans to help recover from the flooding. Local and state emergency management teams surveyed the damage last week and met with SBA staff last Friday after looking at more than 35 flooded homes and businesses in Watauga County to determine what may qualify for funding assistance. If the federal government approves the governor's request, it clears the way for SBA to provide low-interest loans to storm victims. The SBA is the agency that can provide low interest loans for homeowners, renters and businesses that suffered damage from the storms. The mass of thunderstorms that rolled through Jan. 30th brought torrential rains and flooding to the mountains. Boone got 5.3 inches while Deep Gap saw 3.7 inches and of rain and Valle Crucis received nearly 3 inches of rain.

But many are still waiting for action, such as Pamela Graham, still waiting for the DOT to work on a huge gash cut into the pavement on Carter Miller Road in Todd. Now two weeks after the flooding, the DOT has only patched a narrow strip over the washed-out culvert for her to get into her drive, leaving the foot-wide ditch, three feet deep in some places. She recounted her interactions with the DOT last week trying to get action that as of dusk yesterday had not come.