

Agenda Item # 159
Date 3/27/19



FEMA

President Donald J. Trump Approves Major Disaster Declaration for Nebraska

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Release date: March 21, 2019

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WASHINGTON – The Federal Emergency Management Agency announced that federal disaster assistance has been made available to the state of Nebraska to supplement state and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe winter storm, straight-line winds and flooding beginning on March 9, 2019, and continuing.

The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in Butler, Cass, Colfax, Dodge, Douglas, Nemaha, Sarpy, Saunders, and Washington counties. Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Federal funding is also available to the state, tribal and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work damaged by severe winter storm, straight-line winds and flooding in Adams, Antelope, Blaine, Boone, Box Butte, Boyd, Brown, Buffalo, Burt, Butler, Cass, Cedar, Cherry, Colfax, Cuming, Custer, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Douglas, Fillmore, Frontier, Furnas, Gage, Garfield, Gosper, Greeley, Hall, Harlan, Holt, Howard, Jefferson, Johnson, Keya Paha,

Knox, Lancaster, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, Madison, Merrick, Morrill, Nance, Nemaha, Nuckolls, Otoe, Pawnee, Pierce, Platte, Richardson, Rock, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Scotts Bluff, Seward, Sherman, Stanton, Thayer, Thurston, Valley, Washington, Wayne, Wheeler, and York counties and the Santee Sioux Nation, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Sac and Fox, and Winnebago Tribes. As part of the Public Assistance Program, assistance for debris removal and emergency protective measures (Categories A and B), including direct federal assistance, will be provided at 75 percent federal funding.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for the state and tribes in Nebraska.

Constance Johnson-Cage has been named as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area. Johnson-Cage said additional designations may be made at a later date if warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

Individuals and business owners who sustained losses in the designated area can begin applying for assistance by registering online at www.DisasterAssistance.gov (<http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov>) or by calling 1-800-621-3362 or 1-800-462-7585 TTY. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

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Last Updated: March 21, 2019 - 18:06

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Pete Ricketts
Governor

STATE OF NEBRASKA

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March 19, 2019

The Honorable President Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Through: Regional Administrator Paul Taylor
FEMA Region 7
Kansas City, Missouri

RE: Request for Expedited Presidential Disaster Declaration – Major Disaster

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section (501) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § Major citation (206.36), I request that you declare a Major Disaster for the State of Nebraska as a result of flooding, rain, high water, wind-driven rain, hail, lightning, straight-line winds and winter storms which began on March 9th and is continuing.

I am requesting Public Assistance, Individual Assistance and Hazard Mitigation statewide for the counties listed below.

Public Assistance: Indian Tribal Governments: Santee Sioux Nation, Ponca Tribe of Nebraska, Omaha Tribe of Nebraska, Sac and Fox, and Winnebago Tribe, Counties in Nebraska: Adams, Antelope, Blaine, Boone, Box Butte, Boyd, Brown, Buffalo, Burt, Butler, Cass, Cedar, Cherry, Colfax, Cuming, Custer, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Douglas, Fillmore, Frontier, Furnas, Gage, Garfield, Gosper, Greeley, Hall, Harlan, Holt, Howard, Jefferson, Johnson, Keya Paha, Knox, Lancaster, Lincoln, Logan, Loup, Madison, Merrick, Morrill, Nance, Nemaha, Nuckolls, Otoe, Pawnee, Pierce, Platte, Richardson, Rock, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Scotts Bluff, Seward, Sherman, Stanton, Thayer, Thurston, Valley, Washington, Wayne, Wheeler, and York.

Individual Assistance: Santee Sioux Nation, Boone, Buffalo, Burt, Butler, Cass, Colfax, Custer, Dodge, Douglas, Knox, Nance, Nemaha, Richardson, Saline, Sarpy, Saunders, Thurston, Washington

Hazard Mitigation: Statewide

On March 12, 2019, I declared a State of Emergency to include all 93 counties in Nebraska because of the impending blizzard and flooding across the state in accordance with 44 CFR 206.36 (c) (1)- in response to the current situation, I have taken appropriate action under state law by directing

the execution of the state's emergency operations plan. I have also signed Executive Order 19-02 which relaxed motor carrier hours of service as well as length and load restrictions for commercial motor vehicles and motor carriers engage in the disaster response and recovery efforts.

I. The Disaster is a Catastrophe of Unusual Severity and Magnitude When Field Damage Assessments are not Necessary- 44 CFR 206.36(d)

Attached are documents that show a summary of the damage costs to date; this number will change dramatically as these are preliminary numbers and many areas are still under water or inaccessible. As we are able to assess damages to the other affected counties, including infrastructure damage, I reserve the right to request additional types of federal assistance and for additional counties in Nebraska.

The State of Nebraska requested that all counties that have submitted a county declaration so far to provide their best estimate of damages both to public and private property and infrastructure loss. The initial numbers are estimates, but, have greatly exceeded the State and County per capita indicators.

II. The Situation is of Such Severity and Magnitude that Effective Response is Beyond the Capability of the State and Affected Local Governments- 44 CFR 206.36(b)(1)

Situation

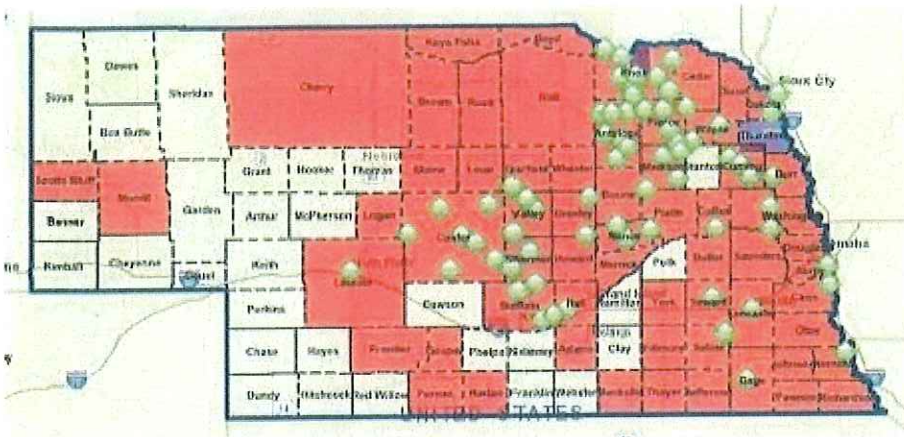
Pursuant to 44 CFR 206.36, I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments, and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster.

At the date of this request, the State of Nebraska state has activated 169 of the Nebraska National Guard. The State has also expended close to \$650,000 just for National Guard Response efforts in the first three days. This amount will continue to significantly increase as response activities continue. This amount does not include response costs for other state agencies such as Nebraska Emergency Management, Nebraska State Patrol or Nebraska Department of Transportation.

As of the date of this request, the State has assisted in the fulfillment of direct assistance requests to numerous local jurisdictions, to include:

- Search and Rescue
- Mass Feeding/drinking water deliveries
- Safety and Security operations
- Activation of State Emergency Response Teams (SERT Teams)

A state declaration was signed by Governor Ricketts on March 12, 2019 and was made for the entire State of Nebraska. There are 93 counties in Nebraska; as of March 19th, 65 counties have submitted a disaster declaration and over 10 additional counties have indicated that a declaration are pending signature from the chief elected official. More than 74 communities in each of the counties have also submitted disaster declarations as well as four Tribal Governments.



County/Municipal Local Declarations- March 18, 2019

The National Weather Service Offices located in Omaha/Valley, NE and Hastings, NE provided a summary letter to accompany this disaster request. The Omaha/Valley National weather service office was forced to evacuate and relocate in Hastings when the levee protecting Valley failed flooding the City of Valley.

Most of Nebraska experienced a very cold and snowy period after the new year began. The soil froze to depths of 1-2 feet deep and then almost 2 feet of snow fell in many locations during February; rivers also had built between 1-2 feet of ice. The initial concern for the State was that ice would jam the rivers and cause flooding, however, this was only part of the problem. Beginning about March 9th, temperatures began to finally warm above freezing; but, since the temperatures stayed close to freezing at night there was not a "slow" melt. On March 12th-14th there was a major storm system that moved across the state resulting in half of the state being covered in a blizzard warning and the other half being in flood watches. The end result was the all snow pack on the ground in the eastern half of the state melted in a matter of 3 days along with 1-3in of rain fell during the storm system. The rain and snowmelt had nowhere to go due the frozen ground so it was forced to run into streams and rivers. Seventeen new record flood levels were set during the flooding including on the Missouri River south of Omaha. Records were also set on the Loup, Elkhorn, Platte and other smaller rivers during this event. Even in the central part of the state, near Grand Island, NE; new record flood levels were set on the Platte River. The impacts of these events will be felt by the citizens of Nebraska for many years to come.

There have been three deaths confirmed as a result of the event; two individuals were swept away by floodwaters. One was swept away when the Spencer dam failed and the other was swept away while trying to save a stranded motorist from the floodwaters. Another death was reported after multiple rescue attempts failed due to harsh weather conditions. There has also been one injury reported; which was a deputy county emergency manager responding during the event has been reported to the state.

Volunteer Agencies

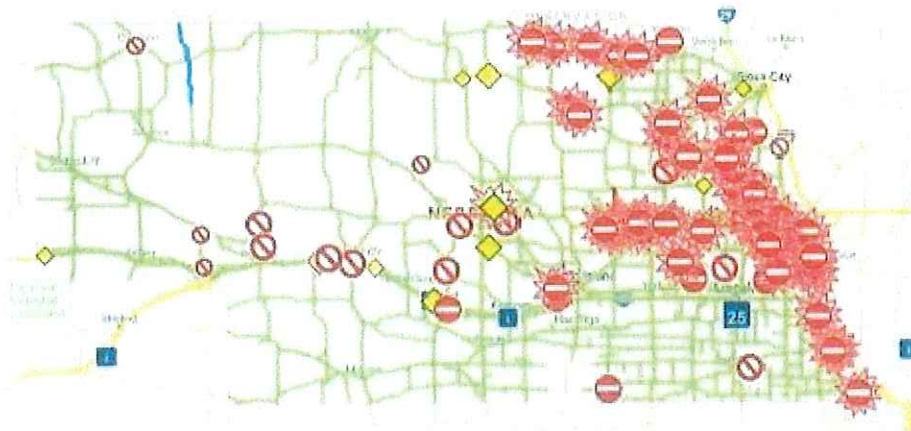
As of March 19th, there have been over 2,682 people in over 22 Red Cross and Partner shelters. Nebraska VOAD is fulfilling requests for sheltering, food, water, and supplies with assistance from the Heartland Church network and the Salvation Army Omaha. Response across the state was supported by generous donations of water and other supplies from several private businesses and non-profit organizations, including three semi-trailers full of bottled water from Hy-Vee, several truckloads of water from Convoy of Hope, and 40 pallets of water from the Orphan Grain Train.

The Red Cross has provided 4,236 meals as of 7:00am on March 18. We are having major water shortages that have required assistance across the state. 484,000 bottles of water have been delivered across the state. The Emergency Operations Center foresees the need for facilities that include shower and laundry capabilities and plan on enlisting the assistance from volunteer agencies to fulfill these needs.

Currently, multiple Non-Governmental Organizations are in-service throughout the State including but not limited to: American Red Cross, Christian Aid Ministries, Convoy of Hope, Great Plains United Methodist Disaster Response, Kansas- Nebraska Southern Baptist Disaster Relief, Legal Aid of Nebraska Disaster Relief, Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska, Seventh Day Adventist Disaster Relief and Southeast Nebraska Medical Reserve Corps.

Impacts

There have been significant impacts as a result of the event that has affected a large portion of the state population ranging from loss of significant infrastructure systems including highways, roads, and bridges to residences and private businesses. All highways in the Nebraska Panhandle were closed due to blizzard conditions on March 14th-15th. Interstate 80 was closed for up to 24 hours- resulting in significant transportation issues nationwide. Hundreds of county roads have been reported as washed out or damaged.



NDOJ-Road Closures- March 18, 2019

To date, over \$439,000,000 in estimated damages have been reported to public infrastructure. The public infrastructure damaged would include (but not be limited to); water and waste water treatment facilities, roads and bridges, public buildings and equipment, debris removal, emergency protective measures, and utility systems. An estimated \$85,000,000 in damages occurred to private homes and business - 2,067 homes and 341 businesses are estimated to have been damaged or destroyed by this event. These numbers are NOT inclusive of all counties or communities; many more communities and counties have yet to provide estimates. Insurance has not been evaluated with these numbers at this point.

Water systems have been disrupted across the state. Multiple communities have lost all drinking water as well as waste water treatment capacity as flood waters have destroyed their water lines. All of Boyd County has been without drinking water for 24-36 hours. Drinking water issues currently exist in at least five counties, and more are anticipated. Sarpy County has reported approximately \$100,000,000 in damages to their waste water treatment facility. All of these costs are preliminary and may adjust; however, the impact to water systems has been tremendous.

Grocery stores are reporting dwindling supplies across the state in communities that have been cut off by floodwaters. The City of Fremont was surrounded by floodwaters and there were no roads open to get in or out of the community. Hy-Vee Grocery, in conjunction with the Army National Guard, State Patrol and Nebraska Department of transportation, was able to finally deliver eight semi loads of food to Fremont. In order to complete this task; National Guard and State Patrol escorted the semis through the flood water - Dept. of Transportation cleared roads of debris and moved barricades.

Evacuations have taken place in over 20 counties across the state, and several communities still have no access in or out, or are completely inundated by floodwater. The communities of Waterloo and Valley in Douglas County are two examples of this situation. Several critical levees and dams have either overtopped, are expected to overtop, or have been destroyed along the Elkhorn, Niobrara, Loup, Platte and Missouri Rivers among many others. Conditions of levees across the state deteriorated quickly. Additional levees are at risk of falling even as the flood water level lower in the smaller rivers. The city of Lincoln, the second largest city in the state with a population of around 225,000, had its water supply impacted and initially on Saturday March 16 requested a voluntary water use reduction within the city. Lincoln has since imposed a mandatory water restriction as of 8:00 AM on March 18th.

Many areas around Nebraska had flooding occur in places not located within the Special Flood Hazard Area, as shown on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Flood Insurance Rate Maps. This was due to the condition of the soil and rivers prior to the storm, combined with the failure of flood control systems. When the rain began falling the soil moisture was already high from the prior fall, frozen from a long period of below freezing temperatures, and covered in snow. Due to the saturated and frozen soils any rain that fell was turned directly into runoff. The rainfall amounts were not significant, but the amount of moisture still in the soil, water in the snowpack, and the frozen ground created a flood that appears to have exceeded the one-percent-annual-chance flood in many areas. To make matters worse many streams still had significant ice cover which created conditions favorable for ice jams to occur. There are communities that were flooded due to ice jams. As runoff found its way to the streams, gages recorded record or near-

record peaks resulting in strain to flood control systems through much of the State. To date, there have been two dam failures and eight levee failures.

Multiple area hospitals and care facilities have either had to evacuate due to flooding or are working on sandbagging to protect their facilities. Examples of hospitals and assisted living facilities that evacuated or were significantly impacted were located in Norfolk, Pender, Pierce, Schuyler, and Genoa. Public School districts in North Bend and Cedar Bluffs have been closed indefinitely as a result of the flooding. These closures will affect over 1,247 students. The consolidated school district in Boyd County is also closed until some sort of dependable water source can be obtained. Dozens of other schools also close for several days due to travel restrictions or flooded roads. Many schools that typically bus students' multiple miles on aggregate roads changed the bussing policy for a couple of weeks due to dangerous driving conditions; they did not leave hard surfaced roads and parents had to take kids to meet the busses.

On March 15th, Cooper Nuclear Station declared a Notice of Unusual Event (NOUE) and as of 1330 on March 16th began to shut down power generation. Multiple power outages have been reported from Omaha Public Power District as well as Nebraska Public Power District and many other public power districts across the state have been, and still are reporting power outages as the event continues.

Losses to agriculture, the major industry for the State of Nebraska, are already being felt, due to it being calving season. Thousands of livestock have perished either due to extreme cold weather, blizzard conditions, or extreme flooding. The loss of water supplies in many areas has caused large concern for large cattle, swine and chicken operations; the farms and feedlots could not be accessed due to floodwater and drinking water for the animals had to be trucked in. The Nebraska Cattlemen's Association is estimating that feedlot and cow/calf operations have a \$400 million loss; increase transportation costs due to infrastructure loss is \$1 million/day. Feedlots have lost approximately \$36 million in feed supplies and crop loss is estimated to be in range of the \$440 million. This is a huge impact to Nebraska's primary industry. This loss will have far reaching impacts in all areas of the state, income tax revenue will dramatically decrease, sales of goods and services will decrease due to lower income, which will impact individuals who work in the goods and services industries across the state and country with decreased sales. With significant decreases in income tax revenue, sales tax revenue and property taxes, local jurisdictions, as well as the state, will have significant issues with recovering without assistance.

Response Efforts

The following information is furnished on the nature and amount of State, local, or Indian tribal government resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster:

1. Local first responders, in conjunction with state agencies, have been diligently responding to life safety issues such as water rescues over the last 72 hours.
2. Local Law Enforcement for traffic control, evacuation support, and security in damaged areas.
3. Local Fire Departments for search and rescue, evacuation support, and traffic control.

DR-4375 affected much of North Central and South Central Nebraska power districts, due to an ice storm. DR-4387 affected Northeast Nebraska by severe storms and flooding. Almost all of the counties declared in both of these 2018 events are currently being impacted.

Nebraska has a constitutional requirement to maintain a balanced budget. Low farm/agricultural commodity prices created a shortfall in revenue available to the state and the resulting budget cuts made during the two most recent legislative sessions included a reduction in funding to the Governor's Emergency Fund (GEF).

III. Certification by the Governor That State and Local Obligations and Expenditures for the Current Disaster Will Comply with all Applicable Cost Sharing Requirements of the Stafford Act- 44 CFR 206.36 (c)(5)

Please see the enclosure, FEMA Form 010-0-13

Once again, based on the information provided the State of Nebraska is requesting a Major Disaster Declaration. Given the timing of this request, accurate figures from impacted local governments are not available but we believe the impacts and affects to be so significant to warrant such approval of such request.

Sincerely,



Pete Ricketts
Governor

Enclosures:

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
Statement from National Weather Service
Governor's Proclamation.
Listing of Counties impacted