



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU
Governor

May 12, 2023

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Lori Ehrlich
Regional Administrator
FEMA Region 1, Boston, MA 02110

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I respectfully request that a major disaster be declared for the State of New Hampshire. This request is due to a severe winter storm and snowstorm from March 13-15, 2023, that resulted in two-day record snowfall in Cheshire and Hillsborough Counties and overwhelmed State and local resources. Though record snowfall was not experienced throughout all counties, costs were incurred statewide.

I, hereby request a designation of the full Public Assistance Program for Belknap, Cheshire, Carroll, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, and Sullivan counties and a statewide designation of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. Additionally, I request the addition of snow assistance pursuant to 44 CFR § 206.227, for Cheshire and Hillsborough Counties. The effects of the snowfall in the State of New Hampshire are evident as demonstrated in the Current and Historic Snowfall Data enclosure.

As a result of this severe winter storm, the State of New Hampshire received significant snowfall in all 10 counties and required a comprehensive statewide snow removal response by local and state agencies. This severe winter storm considerably strained state and local resources; it consumed staff time and exhausted available resources due to significant snowfall conditions, strong winds, and reduced visibility that restricted travel and storm operations.

The significant accumulation of snow and wind conditions which resulted in hundreds of traffic accidents and vehicles off the road, forced hundreds of school closures, and delayed or canceled transit, rail, and flights across much of the state. These conditions created damages that overwhelmed the capabilities of state and local jurisdictions and required an immediate, urgent response.

Many public and non-public schools were without power requiring schools to be both canceled and shifted to a remote learning during the severe winter storm. An emergency generator was deployed to at least one school location where significant utility damage occurred nearby to allow students to return to

school. The Contoocook Valley School District (SAU 1) was closed for an entire week due to the impacts from the severe winter storm and snowstorm.

NHDOT used the fifth highest amount of salt this season at 219,475 tons, since 1942 when tracking salt use began. The State's DOT Winter Maintenance Snow Removal and Ice Control Policy is based on an average accumulation of 1" per hour. Precipitation over 1" per hour will result in higher accumulations on the road than the current policy indicates. When snow falls over 2" per hour, traveling in these conditions will be very difficult for even the most experienced winter drivers. This storm was difficult as it impacted the commuting public on four separate occasions.

Pursuant to the intensity of this severe winter storm, on March 13-15, 2023, I executed the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) with the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to a partial level. While I did not declare a State of Emergency in New Hampshire, the nature and amount of State and local governmental resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster are as follows:

1. The SEOP was executed on March 14, 2023, and I instructed the Director of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) to activate and staff the SEOC. At 0600 hours on March 14, the SEOC opened at a partial activation level. The SEOC was activated to monitor the situation, coordinate state response activities and to respond to local requests for assistance and resources. The Director initiated the appropriate Emergency Support Function (ESF) lead agencies to ensure an adequate and timely response to the needs of our state. The SEOC remained staffed until 2000 hours on March 16, 2023, then returned to steady state. After the closure, the HSEM Duty Officer remained on call on a 24/7 basis to coordinate the needs of local communities during the recovery phase.
2. ESFs that were activated included: Transportation (ESF 1), Public Works and Engineering (ESF 3), Fire Fighting (ESF 4) Emergency Management (ESF 5), Energy (ESF 12), Public Safety and Law Enforcement (ESF 13), and Public Information (ESF 15).
3. The NH Department of Transportation (NHDOT) coordinated transportation, public works, and engineering needs across the state. Prior to the storm, crews treated roadways in anticipation of heavy precipitation. In response to the storm, NHDOT held force account workers starting in the overnight hours of March 12-13, 2023, and worked through the morning of March 15, 2023, with the highest concentration being March 13-14, 2023. NHDOT staff and contract employees maintained snow removal efforts for more than 45 hours in the affected counties. They called in extra personnel, including contract labor and equipment, to aid the response efforts, primarily for plowing and salting operations. These efforts continued Tuesday, March 13, and concluded beyond the nighttime hours of Wednesday, March 14. NHDOT used 14,566 tons of salt statewide in response to the storm, which is over 6.6% of their usage during this season.

NHDOT had to increase staffing at the Transportation Management Center (TMC), which serves as the central 24-hour dispatch center, to help with the dispatching of NHDOT equipment. NHDOT also had personnel supporting the SEOC during its activation.

4. The Department of Safety, Division of State Police responded to 296 motor vehicle accidents from March 13-15, 2023. Additionally, the NH State Police Communications Unit phone call

volume increased 230% compared to the week previous out of the headquarters dispatch location in Concord, New Hampshire.

5. On March 14, 2023, the Department of Safety, Division of Emergency Services and Communications (DESC) answered 2,540 calls to 911 which is a 130% increase from a normal day in March. In total between March 13-15, 2023, DESC answered more than 5,000 calls to 911.
6. Over 75 roads statewide were closed due to down power lines and trees making the roads unsafe and impassable. State highway I-93, Route 202 and Route 9 were each closed for an extended period of time during the severe winter storm due to necessary utility repairs, ESF 12 coordinated with ESFs 1 and 13 to close the roads and fix the downed powerlines. At the height of the severe winter storm and snowstorm there were 78,869 residents in the state without power.
7. The SEOC was aware of a half dozen local and county EOCs that opened to respond to the needs and safety of their communities. Coordinating activities included snow and debris removal from roadways, health and welfare checks to homes and coordination of response and recovery efforts.
8. Several warming centers were opened for residents and visitors to utilize during the severe winter storm.

Based on Initial Damage Assessments (IDA) reported by the communities and record snowfall amounts, the Director of HSEM requested the Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process to begin on March 29, 2023. The Joint PDA included the following counties: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan. The effects of this incident in the State of New Hampshire are evident as demonstrated in the Public Assistance enclosure.

While the Joint PDAs were focused on Cheshire, Hillsborough, and Sullivan counties, IDAs coordinated by HSEM prior to the Joint PDAs reported damages in all 10 counties. From data collected during the IDA process that the State of New Hampshire completed, more than \$6 million in costs were incurred related to this incident. Specifically, ESFs 1 and 3 submitted more than \$3 million in costs related to the severe winter storm statewide but nearly \$2.5 million were ineligible to count toward the threshold as several counties did not meet their record or near-record snowfall amounts.

The State indicator has exceeded \$2,438,226 (\$1.77 per capita), with current state and local damages verified at \$2,649,138 (\$1.92 per capita) from this incident. The figures captured in Enclosure B reflect uninsured losses and only those that meet FEMA project eligibility; the overall costs were significantly higher. The Joint PDAs focused on reviewing damages to Category A – Debris Removal, Category B – Emergency Protective Measures that included snow removal, de-icing, sanding of roads and related personnel expenses, and Category F – Public Utilities. The communities that sustained the highest per capita impact in Cheshire County were Alstead (\$17.86/capita), Fitzwilliam (\$15.98/capita), and Chesterfield (\$14.59/capita). In Hillsborough County, Sharon (\$54.90/capita), Antrim (\$25.14/capita), and Mason (\$28.33). NH Electric Cooperative and NHDOT incurred costs in several counties which contributed to the statewide indicator.

The State of New Hampshire continues to manage the recovery efforts for open disasters, straining state and local resources. The following is list of open Disasters that the State of New Hampshire continues to work toward close out:

- December 23-25, 2022 | FEMA-4693-DR
 - This severe weather event was preceded by heavy snowfall across the State of New Hampshire. Rapid warming occurred on December 23, creating an abundant runoff from snow melt accompanied by extreme rainfall. This combination created water flow and runoff that many culverts did not have the capacity to handle. The snow that remained on the trees became wet and heavy, and combined with severe winds, caused trees and limbs to fall causing severe damages across the state and widespread power outages over the Christmas weekend. By 1830 hours on December 23, there were 133,883 power outages reported, which prompted local communities to open warming centers and overnight shelters as temperatures dropped drastically.

- July 29-August 2, 2021 | FEMA-4624-DR
 - On the heels of the July 17- 19, 2021, storm, the State of New Hampshire was struck by a second storm that was characterized by two rounds of rainfall, the first of which took place July 29-30, 2021, and the second of which took place August 1-2, 2021. The two rainfall events occurred less than 48 hours apart. The limited time between the end of the first round of rainfall and the start of the second, the hydrological data supporting the connection between the two rounds of flash flooding, and the continuation of above-average water levels in rivers and reservoirs in southwestern New Hampshire between the two dates supported a logical and scientific decision that led to these two events being considered a single natural disaster.
 - The Town of Acworth in Sullivan County was the hardest hit community during this event. The heavy rains washed out 75% of the town's road infrastructure and numerous culverts. Flooding caused damages to 29 of the town's roads, prompting the complete closure of 12 of those. Crane Brook Road., for example, sustained such significant damage that the town-employed engineer estimated that none of road was salvageable. The road would need to be rebuilt completely. The town of Acworth alone sustained an estimated \$1,394,639 in damages from this event.
 - Throughout these communities, roads were undermined and roadside shoulders, ditches, and adjacent slopes were washed away. State and local culverts, pipe headwalls, bridges, and other drainage structures were overwhelmed with water and debris causing damage or complete destruction to area infrastructure.
 - The state continues to actively work with applicants to submit recovery projects to FEMA for Federal reimbursement.

- July 17-19, 2021 | FEMA- 4622- DR
 - Five to 8 inches of rain had already fallen within the previous 30-day period. This area of the state typically sees around 4 to 5 inches of rainfall throughout the entire month of July, meaning the area was on track to be well above the average for monthly precipitation. Soil moisture and river levels were above average at the start of the rainfall event that caused the flooding on July 17-19, 2021. Two rounds of widespread, heavy precipitation moved through southwestern New Hampshire on the evening of July 17, 2021.
 - A combination of very warm, moist air and slow-moving clusters of thunderstorms deposited rainfall of more than 2-4 inches across the disaster area, with the highest official rainfall report being 6.90 inches in the Town of Jaffrey. Most of the precipitation fell within a period

of less than 12 hours, with estimated rainfall rates as high as 3 inches per hour reported at times.

- According to NOAA Atlas data, the recurrence interval of a rainfall event of this magnitude is once every 25 to 50 years, with isolated areas with the highest rainfall amounts, such as Jaffrey, experiencing a 1% probability event (a recurrence interval of 100 years). Extensive flooding was reported in several towns across southwestern New Hampshire through the early morning hours of July 18, and flood waters did not fully recede along river and streams in the impacted area until July 19.
 - The state continues to work with applicants from this disaster to submit projects for reimbursement from FEMA.
- January 20, 2020-May 11, 2023 | FEMA-4516-DR
 - The COVID-19 Pandemic has put an incredible amount of strain on State and local resources and response capabilities. The length and sheer magnitude of this disaster has far exceeded any that the State has experienced in the past. As of May 11, 2023, 382,242 people have tested positive in New Hampshire for COVID-19 and 3,055 people have died because of the virus.
 - The State of New Hampshire continues to coordinate with Federal and local partners to process projects for reimbursement for costs expended in response to the COVID-19 disaster.
- July 11-12, 2019 | FEMA-4457-DR
 - A flash flooding event caused significant damages to towns in Grafton County. The recurrence interval of a rainfall event of the magnitude that occurred during this incident is once every 1,000 years, or 0.1% chance annually according to NOAA Atlas-14 data.
 - The flooding caused damages in towns that exceeded 10 times their annual operating budgets. Campgrounds were flooded, prompting emergency swift water rescues, emergency road closures, and debris plugged a 16-foot-wide culvert, resulting a dam-like structure that burst in the middle of the night, sending a 15-foot wall of water downstream in several communities. The water washed away roads, culverts, berms, and a local racetrack that is a major economic staple in the area. State infrastructure, including snowmobile, hiking, and other recreational trails that are essential to the New Hampshire economy, were damaged and closed to the public for many weeks.
 - The State of New Hampshire is still actively managing recovery efforts for this disaster. Towns in Grafton County were hit particularly hard in this event and were still recovering from FEMA-4355-DR and FEMA-4329-DR when this flash flooding event occurred. Many of the same areas that suffered flooding and damages to their infrastructure in FEMA-4355-DR saw new and more significant damage following this flash flooding event. The economic strain that resulted from these back-to-back disasters has left some towns ill-equipped to manage another disaster.
- March 13-14, 2018 | FEMA-4371-DR
 - A severe winter storm resulted in significant snowfall in all 10 counties and required a comprehensive statewide snow removal response by local and state agencies. Blizzard conditions caused hundreds of traffic accidents and vehicles off the road, forced over 500 school closures, and delayed or canceled transit, rail and flights across much of the state.

- The State of New Hampshire is still actively managing administrative functions for this disaster declaration.
- March 2-8, 2018 | FEMA-4370-DR
 - Strong winds, significant storm surge up to 3 feet, and coastal flooding caused widespread damages to infrastructure and the seawall in Rockingham County. At the peak of the incident, wave heights reached upwards of 18 feet.
 - The State of New Hampshire is still actively managing recovery efforts for this disaster. Seawall repairs and mitigation will take multiple years to complete due to project complexity.
- October 30, 2017 | FEMA-DR-4355
 - Severe rain and wind storm resulting in county-wide flash flooding conditions, strong winds, widespread roadway destruction, historical power outages, and significant debris that restricted travel and emergency operations which overwhelmed state and local resources in all 10 counties. At the peak of the incident, there were over 270,000 electrical utility customers without power in the state.
 - The State of New Hampshire is still actively managing recovery efforts for this disaster.
- July 1-2, 2017 | FEMA-DR-4329
 - Severe thunderstorms with heavy rain left widespread damages to state and local infrastructure. The storm resulted in campgrounds being flooded and evacuated to a local shelter and caused significant damages in Coos and Grafton Counties.
 - The State of New Hampshire is still actively managing recovery efforts for this disaster.
- March 14, 2017 | FEMA-DR-4316
 - Severe winter storm with heavy, wet snow and gusting winds, left 143,988 homes and businesses without power and damaged over 200 electrical power poles. The storm resulted in hundreds of traffic accidents, over 500 school closures, and caused significant damages in Belknap and Carroll Counties.
 - The State of New Hampshire is still actively managing recovery efforts for this disaster.

Given the severity and magnitude of this natural disaster, Federal assistance is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state and local governments to recover from disaster related losses. Additionally, as required by 44 CFR § 206.36 (c)(5), I certify that all state and local government obligations and expenditures for the current disaster will comply with all applicable cost sharing requirements of the Stafford Act.

For New Hampshire local jurisdictions, the greatest remaining unmet recovery need associated with this severe winter storm and snowstorm is financial assistance to help avoid economic shock to businesses and families through local property taxes. Without federal assistance the ability of the communities within the State of New Hampshire to recover in a timely manner and avoiding long-term economic damage is severely hindered.

Thank you for your consideration of this Major Disaster Declaration Request. I look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu
Governor

Enclosures: OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
 B: Estimated Stafford Act Requirements for Public Assistance
 D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data
 National Weather Service, Weather Impact Summary
 National Weather Service, Public Information Statement

ENCLOSURE B TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST
Estimated Stafford Act Requirements for Public Assistance

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

FINAL

Event Name: March 13-15, 2023 Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm
Event Date(s): March 13-15, 2023

New Hampshire

State \$1.77
County \$4.44

| Date: 5/1/2023 | | PUBLIC DAMAGE | | | | | | | GOAL | | | |
|---------------------|-----------|---------------|------------|------|-------|-------------|--------|-------------|--------------|-----------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Report #: | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | TOTAL | POP 2020 Est | \$/CAP | \$4.44/CAP | SHORT |
| Belknap County | \$70,405 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$117,008 | \$0 | \$187,413 | 63,705 | 2.94 | 282,850 | (95,438) |
| Carroll County | \$16,074 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$19,019 | \$0 | \$35,093 | 50,107 | 0.70 | 222,475 | (187,382) |
| Cheshire County | \$103,031 | \$481,360 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$584,391 | 76,458 | 7.64 | 339,474 | 0 |
| Coos County | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 31,288 | 0.00 | 138,830 | (138,830) |
| Grafton County | \$11,381 | \$4,333 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$15,714 | 91,118 | 0.17 | 404,564 | (388,851) |
| Hillsborough County | \$116,653 | \$929,329 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$1,045,981 | 422,937 | 2.47 | 1,877,840 | (831,860) |
| Merrimack County | \$20,076 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$41,135 | \$0 | \$61,212 | 153,808 | 0.40 | 682,908 | (621,696) |
| Rockingham County | \$61,706 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$282,548 | \$0 | \$344,254 | 314,176 | 1.10 | 1,394,941 | (1,050,688) |
| Strafford County | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | 130,889 | 0.00 | 581,147 | (581,148) |
| Sullivan County | \$56,949 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$318,132 | \$0 | \$375,081 | 43,063 | 8.71 | 191,200 | 0 |
| State Agencies | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | State POP | \$/CAP | \$1.77/CAP | SHORT |
| Totals | \$456,274 | \$1,415,021 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$777,843 | \$0 | \$2,649,138 | 1,377,529 | 1.92 | \$2,438,226 | \$0 |
| NOTES: | | DEBRIS | PROTECTIVE | ROAD | WATER | BUILDINGS & | PUBLIC | PARKS & | | 1,377,529 | State Population Check Sum | |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|----------------|--------|---------------|-------|
| Percentages | DEBRIS CLEARANCE | 17.22% | PROTECTIVE MEASURES | 53.41% | ROAD SYSTEM | 0.00% | WATER CONTROL | 0.00% | BUILDINGS & EQUIPMENT | 0.00% | PUBLIC UTILITY | 29.38% | PARKS & OTHER | 0.00% |
|-------------|------------------|--------|---------------------|--------|-------------|-------|---------------|-------|-----------------------|-------|----------------|--------|---------------|-------|

DAMAGE ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

| Date: 5/11/2023 | | PUBLIC DAMAGES - STATE AGENCIES NOT SPECIFIC TO ANY COUNTY | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Report #: | A | B | C | D | E | F | G | TOTAL |
| NH DOT | | | | | | | | \$0 |
| NH DNCR | | | | | | | | \$0 |
| NH F&G | | | | | | | | \$0 |
| HSEM | | | | | | | | \$0 |
| Totals | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 | \$0 |

ENCLOSURE D TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST

Historic and Current Snowfall Data

| County | Incident Snowfall Data | | NCDC Record Snowfall Data | | Evaluation | | | |
|--------------|------------------------|--------|---------------------------|--------|-----------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| | NWS Snowfall | Period | Amount | Period | Record Exceeded | Near Record | Contiguous County | Core County |
| Belknap | 15 | 2-day | 42.4 | 2-day | | | | |
| Carroll | 19.6 | 2-day | 41.0 | 2-day | | | | |
| Cheshire | 35 | 2-day | 32.0 | 2-day | X | | | X |
| Grafton | 16.5 | 2-day | 40.0 | 2-day | | | | |
| Hillsborough | 36.5 | 2-day | 32.0 | 2-day | X | | | X |
| Merrimack | 26.0 | 2-day | 48.0 | 2-day | | | | |
| Rockingham | 19.8 | 2-day | 42.2 | 2-day | | | | |
| Sullivan | 23.8 | 2-day | 36.5 | 2-day | | | | |