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**HOMELAND SECURITY AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SEEKS DAMAGE ASSESSMENTS FROM LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

CONCORD, N.H. – As part of ongoing efforts to obtain federal assistance for local communities damaged by the March 14 nor'easter, State Homeland Security and Emergency Management Director Perry Plummer Thursday asked local communities for damage assessments to determine if the State and counties sustained enough damage to meet federal thresholds.

“We may be in the ballpark of meeting the threshold, which could result in a request from Governor Sununu for a major disaster declaration from the president,” Plummer said. “Major declarations open the door for the availability of disaster-related Stafford Act funding and technical assistance. Time is critical for this request to be made.”

The nor'easter dropped more than a foot of snow in many areas, caused blizzard conditions and significant winds that damaged trees and utilities, leaving more than 55,000 customers without power, Plummer said. Homeland Security and Emergency Management opened the State Emergency Operations Center and local emergency management directors opened a dozen local emergency operations centers and shelters, he said. Emergency crews responded to hundreds of incidents involving trees and damaged utilities, he said.

For the Governor to make a request, the State must have sustained \$1.88 million in damages, the federally determined damage threshold, Plummer said. Additionally, each county must also meet a damage threshold. Even if a particular county cannot meet its damage threshold, those costs should be reported because they can count toward the State threshold total, he said.

Damage to all state, municipal and certain private non-profit infrastructures are eligible for funding under a disaster declaration, including funding to restore and repair that infrastructure, Plummer said.

Town officials are asked to complete an Initial Damage Assessment using the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Resource Center and to work with HSEM Field Representatives to complete assessments by close of business on Thursday, April 6, 2017.

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