



STATE OF MAINE
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
1 STATE HOUSE STATION
AUGUSTA, MAINE
04333-0001

**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION
GOVERNOR'S REQUEST COVER LETTER
MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY**

May 2, 2024

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

Through: Ms. Lori Ehrlich
Regional Administrator
FEMA Region 1
220 Binney Street
Cambridge, Massachusetts 02142

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 humbly request that you declare a Major Disaster for Cumberland County and York County in the state of Maine as a result of a severe winter storm that occurred between April 3, 2024, and April 5, 2024. Specifically, I am requesting Public Assistance (PA) categories A through G and Z, as well as Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funding for use statewide.

Details of my request are offered in the attached Request for Presidential Disaster Declaration (OMB Control No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13), and the extent of damages are further supported with supplemental information. Validated damages for the event can be found in Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance. Meteorological factors and precursors for this severe storm have also been supplied and are described in detail in the attached National Weather Service Event Report. A State of Emergency was not declared for this event; however, all state offices were closed between April 4th and part of April 5th to deter travel during severe conditions.

On April 3rd, an area of low pressure developed along the Mid-Atlantic coast that tracked northeastward into the Gulf of Maine. Between April 4th and April 5th, the low-pressure system stalled and weakened over Maine bringing periods of heavy, wet snow and strong winds which produced significant tree damage, major travel disruption, and widespread power outages across western and southwestern Maine. Southwest Maine, including York County and Cumberland County, received a low end of four to six inches



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of accumulation near the coast and over twenty inches in the higher elevations. Minor coastal flooding resulted in some road disruptions, however the detrimental combination of wind and heavy snow resulted in power loss to approximately 40 percent of the state by the afternoon of April 4th. Debris removal and emergency protective measure expenses across Cumberland County and York County alone have singlehandedly resulted in the state of Maine surpassing its damage threshold.

The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Duty Officer remained in enhanced monitoring status through the onset of the storm the evening of April 3rd, however the State Emergency Operations Center moved to a planned full activation as of 7:00am on April 4, 2024. The State remained in a full activation status through the evening of April 5th, at which point MEMA returned to an enhanced monitoring status. Throughout the event, the Emergency Operations Center received multiple resource requests to assist in the delivery of 1,500 cots across various locations. Due to an influx of visitors to Maine for the Solar Eclipse, standard lodging accommodations were largely unavailable and additional coordination was required to station over 1,145 regional utility crews and 284 Canadian utility crews in support of overall restoration efforts. Of the 1,000 crews deployed to central and southern Maine to restore power, many slept in congregate locations to include school gyms in Biddeford and Old Orchard Beach, fire stations in Cornish, Kennebunk, Ogunquit, and York, and on the second floor of the York County Court House in Alfred.

Power outages ultimately affected nearly 400,000 Central Maine Power and Versant Power customers statewide, with restoration efforts spanning nearly a week in some areas. Power outages peaked at 129,000 outages in York County on the morning of April 4th, and at approximately 105,000 outages in Cumberland County. Reports of power disruptions and the need for back-up power spanned York and Cumberland County hospitals, fire stations, public safety facilities, water treatment facilities, and communication towers linked to dispatch and 911 services. For calls that went through, first responders reportedly struggled to access numerous caller locations due to downed trees, downed wires, and debris in the roads.

By the morning of April 4th, the State had confirmed hundreds of delays and cancellations across air, rail, and ferry transportation terminals due to power outages, downed trees, and severe weather conditions. Nearly every flight arriving and departing from Portland International Jetport in Cumberland County was cancelled or delayed in the morning, with impacts stretching into the afternoon. The Amtrak Downeaster which runs daily trips from six stations between Cumberland and York County to the greater Boston area cancelled seven of their trains and experienced delays with two. Only one train remained fully operational, causing disruptions for commuters and those seeking specialized medical services from hospital systems in the greater Boston area. Numerous ferry systems along the coastline cancelled or delayed trips due to high winds, and Concord Coach Lines also announced the cancellation of bus trips between central/southern Maine and the greater Boston area due to the severity of travel conditions. Road closure information had been received by the state for at least forty roads and major routes across Cumberland and York County, however actual road closures are known to be much higher. Dozens of traffic incidents were reported across the state, with a higher aggregation of accidents and drivers off the road in southern Maine.

In total, the State documented the activation of 49 warming centers in support of those without power. Eleven of those warming center locations resided within Cumberland County, and fourteen warming center locations resided within York County. While there are no reports of loss of work for disaster



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survivors because of the winter storm, hundreds of public and private facilities across the state were shut down as a precaution to keep people off the roads. The severe winter storm did not result in any deaths, injuries, or missing individuals.

The Disaster Recovery Team was activated immediately after the event to support damage data collection across all counties. Only Cumberland County and York County exceeded their respective damage indicators in the public infrastructure Initial Damage Assessment (IDA) phase. The State did not meet its indicator for Individual Assistance, and on-site assessments were therefore not requested for sustained individual and homeowner damages. On April 17th, Maine formally requested a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Public Assistance. Given time restraints associated with meeting the Major Disaster Declaration request submission deadline and given that the bulk of damages spanned debris removal expenses, the state opted to request a virtual joint Preliminary Damage Assessment focusing on debris removal to accelerate the validation of damages. Virtual validations occurred across a total of 45 towns between April 19th and April 24th. Cumberland County, York County, and the state of Maine were all validated as having surpassed their respective thresholds by May 1st. The statewide PDA has validated \$3,113,359 in public infrastructure damages, however total damages are expected to be significantly higher based on Initial Damage Assessment information spanning other damage categories not as thoroughly reviewed during the joint Preliminary Damage Assessment process. Snow removal expenses were not incorporated into the damage assessment process as this event did not result in record snowfall.

ENTITY	DAMAGE THRESHOLD	DAMAGES VALIDATED	THRESHOLD STATUS
Cumberland County	\$1,394,117	\$1,441,914	VALIDATED
York County	\$975,071	\$1,671,322	VALIDATED
State of Maine	\$2,506,741	\$3,113,236	VALIDATED

Validated public infrastructure and emergency protective measure damages from this event are currently broken down as follows; Category A (Debris Removal) was \$2,505,567 (80.48%); Category B (Protective Measures) was \$405,248 (13.02%); Category C (Roads and Bridges) was \$63,147 (2.03%); Category D (Water Control) was \$0 (0%); Category E (Buildings and Equipment) was \$8,756 (0.28%); Category F (Public Utilities) was \$130,518 (4.19%); and Category G (Parks and Other) \$0 (0%). We expect the bulk of damages to remain under Category A and Category B for this event, however all categories are requested in the event that further damages are identified.

Within the last 24 months, Maine has received a total of six disaster declarations and one emergency declaration. On March 22, 2023, DR-4696 was declared across a total of six counties for another severe storm and flood event. On July 26, 2023, DR-4719 was declared across a total of eight counties for yet another severe storm and flood event. On September 5, 2023, DR-4736 was declared for Franklin County for a severe storm and flood event, and one day later, DR-4737 was declared for a severe storm and flood event in Oxford County. An Emergency Declaration, EM-3598-ME, was declared on September 14, 2023, in advance of Hurricane Lee. On January 30, 2024, DR-4754 was declared for a severe storm and flood event spanning ten counties. As recent as March 20, 2024, DR-4764 was declared for a severe storm and flood event spanning all eight of Maine’s coastal counties. With only sixteen counties in Maine, most Maine counties are struggling to balance disaster recovery efforts across a multitude of declared disaster events. Cumberland County is specifically balancing disaster recovery across two of the listed events, and



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York County is balancing recovery across three of the listed events.

With the increased frequency and intensity of storm events in Maine over the last 24 months, emergency management officials across all levels of government remain stretched in their fiscal and programmatic capacity to respond to and recover from disasters. While my administration has pledged \$60 million to helping Maine communities recover and build back stronger from recent disaster events, supplemental grants through FEMA would specifically enable communities across Cumberland County and York County to support the comprehensive recovery needs associated with the severe early April storm.

It has been verified that all damaged infrastructure included in the validation process is not eligible for commercially available insurance coverage, and, therefore, all repair costs must be covered by local government taxpayers if Federal assistance is not obtained. Due to the extent of damage from this event combined with the severity, magnitude, and frequency of events over the last year alone, State resources are stretched and not adequate to meet local recovery needs. At this time, Cumberland County, York County, and the State of Maine have all successfully met their respective per capita thresholds, so I once again, humbly, request that a Major Disaster be declared due to the impacts of the April 3, 2024, to April 4, 2024, severe winter storm.

I have designated Peter Rogers, Director of the Maine Emergency Management Agency, as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Thank you for your continuing support of the state of Maine and our citizens.

Sincerely,



Janet T. Mills
Governor

Enclosures

OMB Control No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance

Additional Supporting Documentation: NWS Weather Event Report_04.03.2024-04.05.2024



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