



STATE OF NEW JERSEY  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
P.O. BOX 001  
TRENTON  
08625  
(609) 292-6000

CHRIS CHRISTIE  
GOVERNOR

November 15, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Through: Ms. Lynn Canton  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
Region II Administrator  
Department of Homeland Security

Dear Mr. President:

Pursuant to the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. § 206.36, I respectfully request a Major Disaster Declaration for the State of New Jersey, applicable to the Counties of Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren as a result of a strong, unseasonable storm that brought early snow, heavy rain, and high winds to the State on October 29, 2011 and caused severe damage in these counties.

The storm, a Nor'easter, resulted from a low pressure system that organized late on October 28, 2011. The National Weather Service (NWS) issued a winter storm warning for the following northern and western counties: Sussex, Warren, Morris, Hunterdon, and Somerset. The NWS issued a winter weather advisory for the following central and southern counties: Middlesex, western Monmouth, Mercer, Salem, Gloucester, Camden, and northwestern Burlington. By the morning of October 29, the system had strengthened as it tracked northeastward along the eastern seaboard. That afternoon, the NWS's winter storm warning was extended to Middlesex and Mercer Counties.

The storm resulted in historic October snow accumulations throughout northern and western New Jersey. Temperatures throughout the region were in the middle to lower 30s for most of this event, resulting in a heavy, wet snow that quickly accumulated on trees and power

lines. The storm also brought strong northerly to northeasterly winds, ranging from 15 to 25 mile per hour gusting up to 35 m.p.h. in these parts of the State. Along coastal locations, gale-force winds were measured, including a 51 m.p.h. gust in Cape May County.

The heavy, wet snow and the strong winds resulted in significant tree and power line damage across western, northern, and central New Jersey. After mild conditions through much of October, many trees throughout the region still had their leaves. The wet snow on the leaves and gusting winds resulted in a great many trees and power lines breaking under the weight and stress.

The tree and power line damage caused substantial utility outages. Hundreds of thousands of customers had no electricity during the storm as well as for several days after the storm. As of 11:00 p.m. on Saturday, October 29, 2011, almost 640,000 customers had no electricity, including 60% of one utility's customers. At 7:00 a.m. on October 30, approximately 561,000 customers had no electricity. Almost 378,000 customers remained without electricity on Monday afternoon, October 31. On the morning of November 1, the third day after the storm, approximately 306,000 customers still had no electricity. The next morning, over 204,000 customers remained without electricity. As of 7:00 a.m. on the fifth day after the storm, 90,000 customers still had no electricity. Over 26,000 customers remained without electricity the next morning. As of 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 5, a full week after the storm, over 11,000 customers remained without electricity. The extended loss of electricity to so many thousands of customers demonstrates the severity of the damage caused by the storm.

The loss of electricity resulted in other utility outages as well, including water and heating. Boil water advisories were issued for parts of Morris, Passaic, Sussex, and Warren Counties. State and county resources responded to the needs created by the loss these utilities. Shelters opened on the day of the storm and remained open through the week. In total, nineteen shelters were opened during the emergency. I am advised by the Office of Emergency Management that approximately two hundred sixty (260) people were sheltered on October 31, 2011, while the next day, 150 people were sheltered. One hundred six (106) people were sheltered on November 2, fifty-eight (58) people were sheltered on November 3, and fifty-six (56) people were sheltered on November 4.

The effects of the storm also appear to have caused, contributed to, or been related to at least five fatalities and numerous motor vehicle accidents. Three fatalities occurred in house fires in Bergen County, and two fatalities occurred in motor vehicle accidents in Bergen County.

The snow as well as the tree and power line damage also created substantial transportation delays. On October 29, 2011, there were 32 partial highway closures. Numerous secondary and local roads were closed during the emergency due to storm-related damage including: vehicle accidents; downed wires, poles, and trees; malfunctioning traffic lights; and flooding. The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJ DOT) deployed over 250 trucks and 70 contracted plows and spreaders. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) deployed chain-saw crews to assist in clearing downed trees. New Jersey Transit rail service was suspended for two days on two branches and, on part of one of those branches, was suspended for five days.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law. I proclaimed a State of Emergency on October 29, and directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act, and thereafter signed an Executive Order memorializing this declaration of emergency. Subsequently, pursuant to the emergency powers available to me, I signed a temporary order lifting certain restrictions placed on commercial carrier hours of service applicable to work associated with utility restoration. I also approved an administrative order issued by the Commissioner of the NJ DEP waiving, suspending, or modifying any existing NJ DEP rule the enforcement of which would be detrimental to the public welfare during the emergency to the extent the rules might otherwise apply to activities deemed necessary by the State Director of Emergency Management.

On November 3, 2011, the State requested FEMA's assistance to conduct a joint preliminary damage assessment (PDA) survey. The PDA survey for the counties included in this request was completed on November 10. The PDA survey indicates that the most severely impacted areas of the State are Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties. As indicated by Enclosure B, these counties suffered damages in Category A-Debris Removal, Category B-Emergency Protective Measures, Category C-Roads and Bridges, Category D-Water Control Facilities, Category E-Buildings and Equipment, Category F-Utilities, and Category G-Parks and Recreational Facilities.

The State developed a Hazard Mitigation Plan that was approved by FEMA in November 2005. The Plan was revised and approved by FEMA in November 2008. The November 2008 Plan was updated to include natural and man-made hazards and was subsequently approved by FEMA on April 28, 2011.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that an effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments, and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance for Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren Counties. The estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in Enclosures A and B. Estimated requirements for assistance from certain federal agencies under other statutory programs are tabulated in Enclosure C. I am also requesting Hazard Mitigation Assistance Statewide.

The following information is furnished concerning the nature and amount of State and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster, but is not exhaustive:

1. On October 29, 2011, the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated and the Regional Operations Intelligence Center elevated to Level III. The State EOC was staffed by personnel from the NJ Office of Emergency Management, NJ State Police, NJ DOT, NJ DEP, NJ Department of Military and Veteran Affairs-NJ National Guard, NJ Board of Public Utilities, and NJ Department of Human Services. The State EOC coordinated resource requests and sheltering efforts as well as monitored and facilitated

utility response and restoration. The State EOC remained activated until November 4 when the Regional Intelligence Operations Center also returned to Level I (Normal Operations).

2. The following Counties also activated their Emergency Operation Centers: Bergen, Essex, Hunterdon, Passaic, Morris, Sussex, Union, and Warren.
3. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection assisted in road clearance and debris removal.
4. The New Jersey Department of Human Services coordinated sheltering operations in affected counties.
5. The New Jersey Department of Transportation cleared and monitored roadways.
6. Numerous county and municipal agencies responded to assist during this disaster, including county and local Office of Emergency Management personnel, fire departments, police communications personnel, public works personnel, and personnel to assist with sheltering.
7. By the evening of October 31, 2011, State, county, and local agencies responded to 287 storm-related road incidents.

I certify that for this disaster, the State and local governments will assume all the applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total expenditures are estimated to exceed the Statewide per capita threshold of \$11,879,857. At this time, the Counties of Cape May, Essex, Hunterdon, Morris, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren exceed their respective county thresholds as tabulated on Enclosure B. The non-federal share of these costs is estimated to exceed \$5,500,000, as set forth in Enclosure D.

In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.208, the State agrees that it will, with respect to direct federal assistance: (1) provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-way necessary to accomplish the approved work; (2) hold harmless and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work; and (3) provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-federal share of the costs of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State Agreement; and (4) assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdiction matters.

In addition, in the event the need for assistance arises to remove debris which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health, and safety, pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United States for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

I have designated Louis Goetting, my Cabinet Secretary, as the Governor's Authorized Representative, and Lieutenant Paul Miller of the New Jersey State Police as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. They will work in conjunction with FEMA to coordinate damage assessments and will provide further information or justification on my behalf when necessary.

The recent series of rain-related events beginning with flooding in mid-August 2011 (DR-4033), including Hurricane Irene (DR-4021) in late August, and culminating in Tropical Storm Lee (DR-4039) in early September have put a severe strain on State, county, and local budgets.

For the reasons detailed above, therefore, I respectfully request at this time a Major Disaster Declaration for the Counties of Bergen, Cape May, Essex, Hunterdon, Middlesex, Morris, Passaic, Somerset, Sussex, Union, and Warren. I also reserve the opportunity to amend this request to include additional counties should further damage assessments supporting their inclusion become available.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Christie". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "C" and a long, sweeping tail that loops back under the name.

Chris Christie  
Governor