



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

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January 14, 2005

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Regional Director
FEMA Region IV
3003 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, Georgia, 30341

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 *et seq.* (the Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the Commonwealth of Kentucky as a result of a winter storm that produced record and near record snowfall, drifting snow, ice, sleet, and freezing rain across Kentucky beginning on 21 December, 2004, and continuing through 28 December, 2004.

On 21 December, 2004, a severe winter storm, producing heavy snowfall with drifting and blowing snow, along with ice and freezing rain, moved across the Commonwealth of Kentucky, resulting in power outages and hazardous traveling conditions. Heavy snowfall and ice on the roads left thousands of stranded travelers on the interstates and in shelters. On Interstate 24 in Western Kentucky, a 29-mile long traffic jam formed from Trigg County to Lyon County. Western and Northern Kentucky, particularly along the Ohio River, bore the brunt of the snowstorm that began on the 22nd and continued into the 23rd. This storm was accompanied by gusty north winds that produced drifts up to fifteen feet deep.

The Governor of Kentucky declared a State of Emergency on 23 December for the following: City of Butler, City of Falmouth, City of Providence, City of Owensboro, and the counties of Bullitt, Carlisle, Crittenden, Daviess, Grayson, Hancock, Hopkins, Livingston, Muhlenberg, McLean, Pendleton, Todd and Shelby.

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Most of the power outages occurred in Hardin, Larue, Shelby, Fayette, Franklin, Pendleton, Bracken, and Owen counties. At the peak of the storm, there were an estimated 30,000 customers without power. Shelters were open due to power outages and hazardous road conditions in the following counties: Daviess, Franklin, Grant, Grayson, Henderson, Lyon, Marshall, Nelson, Ohio, Pendleton, Scott, Trigg and Washington.

The National Weather Service reported record, or near record, snowfall in the following counties: Ballard, Breckinridge, Caldwell, Carlisle, Crittenden, Fulton, Grayson, Hancock, Henderson, Hickman, Hopkins, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, Muhlenberg, McLean, Ohio, Trimble, Union and Webster.

Beginning on the evening of 21 December, the Kentucky National Guard began positioning soldiers on the road in preparation for the winter emergency. There were forty soldiers on duty in Western Kentucky in response to the recent winter storm emergency. Hummers from armories in Benton, Hopkinsville, Madisonville, Marion, Murray and Owensboro were used to extract stranded motorists from their vehicles on state highways.

An additional eighteen soldiers used nine military wreckers to assist in clearing abandoned vehicles blocking traffic along I-24 in Logan, Caldwell and Trigg counties. Throughout two days, both night and day, Kentucky Army National Guard soldiers were called upon to perform other missions as well.

The Kentucky Transportation Cabinet completed snow removal efforts in five Transportation Districts, along with contractor support for snow removal on interstates, parkways and other main routes.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under state law, issuing an Executive Order for a State of Emergency, and directed the execution of the Kentucky Emergency Operations Plan on 21 December, 2004, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. Local officials in forty counties and sixteen cities have issued emergency declarations and have taken all appropriate actions to assure a timely emergency response, including evacuations and shelter operations and restoration to vital public services.

On 5 January, 2005, I requested a joint federal, state and local preliminary damage assessment for sixteen counties. On 10 January, an additional eighteen counties were requested. These preliminary damage assessments have shown that the Commonwealth and the following counties have met their threshold. At this time I am now requesting Public Assistance for the following counties: Ballard, Bracken, Breckinridge, Caldwell, Carlisle, Crittenden, Franklin, Fulton, Grant, Grayson, Hancock, Harrison, Hart,

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Hickman, Hopkins, Larue, Livingston, Lyon, Marshall, Muhlenberg, McLean, Nelson, Owen, Pendleton, Robertson, Shelby, Trimble, Union and Webster.

I am also requesting Hazard Mitigation Assistance for the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments. Supplementary federal assistance is necessary. I am requesting Small Business Administration disaster loans, Public Assistance, Federal Highway Administration Assistance, United States Department of Agriculture disaster loans, and other assistance as may be found appropriate. Specific information regarding these programs is provided in enclosures to this letter.

Preliminary estimates of the types and amounts 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 authorities have not been calculated at this time.

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

Transportation Cabinet: Deployed five districts assisting with snow removal and clearing the interstates and parkways for emergency access. District crews continued to work on intersection and shoulders along with the trouble spots and on some secondary roads. The Transportation Cabinet spent over \$7,000,000.00 during this winter storm.

National Guard: Used over 259 maydays over a 48-hour period, assisting counties and the Kentucky State Police with stranded motorist and clearing the roads for emergency access and restoration of utility service. Graders were also brought in to help the Transportation Cabinet clear the Western Kentucky Parkway of snow and ice in Muhlenberg and Hopkins counties.

Kentucky State Police: Supported road closures, assisted stranded motorist, provided traffic control.

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American Red Cross: Reported shelters open in the following counties: Franklin, Henderson, Nelson, Scott, Trigg, Grayson, Pendleton, Ohio and Washington. The ARC reported one hundred people in the shelter in Trigg County, sixty in Pendleton, three in Scott, two in Ohio, forty-three in Nelson, and fifteen in the shelter in Lyon County.

Over 30,000 structures reported a loss of electricity due to downed trees and power lines, with limited access for emergency vehicles. Dollar loss to utility damages is estimated at \$2,997,845.17 from private non-profit electric cooperatives in the effected communities.

I certify that for this major disaster, state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total expenditures are expected to exceed \$5,563,683.00, in accordance with the table in Enclosure B.

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 of America 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 Mr. Charlie Winter as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,



Ernie Fletcher

Enclosures