



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

February 13, 2017

The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Through: Acting Regional Administrator Ahsha Tribble
FEMA Region IX
Oakland, California 94607-4052

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 Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations § 206.35, I respectfully request that you issue an Emergency Declaration for Direct Federal Assistance for the Counties of Butte, Sutter, and Yuba, as a result of the potential failure of the Lake Oroville Dam emergency spillway.

During January and February of 2017, several atmospheric river storm systems struck California, bringing massive amounts of precipitation. These storms inundated lakes, rivers, and streams, causing them to reach and in some instances outstrip their capacity.

As a result of these storm systems, Lake Oroville in Butte County was at risk of exceeding its capacity, causing officials to utilize the main gated spillway in order to reduce the lake's water levels. On February 7, 2017, concrete in the main gated spillway began to deteriorate. For the first time in the Dam's history, on February 11, 2017, officials were forced to use the emergency spillway in an effort to reduce water levels and avoid catastrophic flooding. Within 24 hours, the ground beneath the emergency spillway became undermined and began to erode.

At that time, State water officials determined the emergency spillway was potentially in danger of failing. If the emergency spillway were to fail, it would send a thirty foot wall of water downstream, resulting in catastrophic flooding. In response to the imminent threat of the emergency spillway failing, I took appropriate action under State law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan. On February 12, 2017, I proclaimed a State of Emergency due to the potential for widespread flooding as a result of the potential failure of the emergency spillway.

My Office of Emergency Services activated the State Operations Center at a level 4, the highest level of activation reserved for incidents categorized as a catastrophic disaster. Additionally, I deployed various state agencies and mobilized the California National Guard to assist response operations for this potential catastrophic disaster.

As a result of the potential for catastrophic flooding, approximately 188,000 residents from Butte, Sutter, and Yuba Counties were forced to immediately evacuate their homes for life and safety. The evacuated residents are currently being offered sheltering in the neighboring Counties of Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, and Yolo. The midnight shelter count on February 13, 2017 conservatively exceeded 3,200 individuals, although we expect this number to increase.

Officials are aggressively attempting to lower Lake Oroville's water levels, as another atmospheric river storm system is scheduled to arrive within 48 hours. This system is expected to bring significant additional rainfall and snow to Northern California. Once this storm system arrives, Lake Oroville's water levels will rise, potentially forcing the need to utilize the failing emergency spillway. This could further erode the ground beneath the emergency spillway and further jeopardize the life and safety of residents of downstream communities.

California has suffered through more than a dozen disasters in the past year, including several devastating wildfires. In 2016 alone, California received thirteen Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) to battle fires in the State, and I proclaimed states of emergency and authorized California Disaster Assistance Act funding for two of those fires. In addition, I have authorized California Disaster Assistance Act funding for

three storm events throughout the State in the past 12 months, including for the storm systems that have given rise to the present emergency. These disasters have severely impacted California's financial ability to respond to this crisis.

I have determined this incident is of such severity and magnitude that continued effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and supplemental federal assistance is necessary to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety, and to lessen the effects of this serious situation. Federal, state, and local officials are still investigating the damage to the main spillway and emergency spillway to determine what other federal assistance may be required. In the meantime, however, I am requesting Direct Federal Assistance for 10,000 residents of Butte, Sutter, and Yuba Counties who have been forced to evacuate and who required federal assistance.

I certify for this emergency, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shared costs as required by the Stafford Act. I have designated the Director of the Office of Emergency Services, Mark Ghilarducci, as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. Mr. Ghilarducci will work with FEMA on my behalf.

Sincerely,


EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
Stafford Act and State Disaster Declarations in Previous 12 Months