



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION
COVER LETTER
MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY**

March 7, 2017

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

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

Dear Mr. President:

California is experiencing one of the heaviest precipitation years in recent history, and the impacts of storms that occurred in January and February have been extremely destructive to the State. Thank you for providing California with federal assistance for the atmospheric river storm system that occurred January 3 through 12, 2017, and for the emergency assistance for the Oroville Dam incident that California is currently combating.

I am now requesting that you declare a Major Disaster for the State of California as a result of an atmospheric river storm system that began on January 18, 2017, and continued through January 23, 2017, 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 (44 CFR) § 206.36.

According to the National Weather Service, during the period of January 18 through 23, 2017, there was an atmospheric river system containing several associated storms that swept through California. This storm system came after a short break that occurred following the previous storm system that occurred January 3 through 12, 2017. A majority of California received significant amounts of precipitation between January 18 and 23, 2017, with some areas receiving more than six inches of rainfall during that span. Higher elevation areas received substantial snowfall, with water equivalent values approaching as much as thirteen inches. As a result of the very heavy rainfall and rapid succession of storms within this atmospheric river, there was not ample time for rivers, creeks, streams to recover to lower levels before being hit by another round of significant precipitation.



This record-breaking precipitation resulted in numerous rivers, creeks, and streams again exceeding flood stages throughout California. Levee overtopping, breaching, and river flooding occurred statewide, including the Eel River, Navarro River, Russian River, Sacramento River, San Diego River, Santa Margarita River, and Yolo Bypass. This precipitation also caused localized mud, dirt, and rock debris flows, which impacted numerous roadways, as well as recent burn scar areas. Heavy winds and severe rainfall caused widespread power outages throughout the affected jurisdictions, leaving an estimated 55,000 households and businesses without power. As a result of these conditions, emergency shelters were established throughout several counties to accommodate individuals forced to evacuate their homes. Additionally, a total of six storm-related fatalities occurred in three counties during this period.

Transportation throughout the State was difficult during the course of the storm system, causing airport delays and major road closures in numerous locations. Severe flooding forced the closure of State Routes 1, 4, 12, 16, 37, 59, 116, 121, 128, 130, 162, 173, 175, 178, 184, 254, 269, U.S. Routes 95 and 101, and Interstate 95. Additionally, mudflows, rock slides, and slip-outs forced the closure of State Routes 1, 9, 16, 17, 18, 24, 26, 27, 41, 49, 70, 74, 84, 96, 128, 129, 138, 152, 162, 178, 184, 198, 243, 245, and U.S. Route 101. Massive snowfall forced the closure of State Routes 3, 18, 33, 38, 54, 88, 130, 138, 158, 168, 330, U.S. Routes 50 and 395, and Interstate 5. Additionally, an avalanche forced the closure of State Routes 88 and 89.

In response to the storm system, numerous counties and cities activated their respective Emergency Operations Centers. Additionally, the California Department of Water Resources Flood Operations Center, and the Governor's Office of Emergency Services's Coastal, Inland and Southern Regional Operations Centers, as well as the State's Operations Center remained activated from the previous atmospheric river storm system as a result of the continuous storm impacts California was experiencing throughout the month. During the activation, the State Operations Center mission-tasked various state agencies to provide resources and assistance to the affected areas. These agencies included the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, California Department of Transportation, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the California National Guard.

I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. On February 28, 2017, I proclaimed a state of emergency to exist within 16 counties and ordered the California Department of Transportation to seek assistance through the Federal Highways Administration's Emergency Relief Program, as damages to eligible highways totaled more than \$137 million as a result of this system.

After conducting initial damage surveys throughout the State, my Office of Emergency Services requested a joint Federal, State, and local damage assessments of the impacted areas. Beginning February 16, 2017, sixteen teams initiated assessments to determine the extent of damage. These assessments indicate the most severe impacts

were to public infrastructure, including roads and bridges, flood and water control structures, and other public facilities.

California has suffered multiple disasters in the past year. In 2016, California received thirteen Fire Management Assistance Grants (FMAG) to battle fires in the State. I also proclaimed states of emergency and authorized California Disaster Assistance Act funding for two of those FMAGs, and three storm events throughout the State in the past twelve months. The past five years of extreme drought and significant tree mortality have also impacted the State's resources.

I have determined this atmospheric river storm system is of such severity and magnitude, it is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and supplemental federal assistance is necessary. Based upon the joint preliminary damage assessments, I am requesting Public Assistance, and any other Stafford Act disaster assistance programs as appropriate for the counties of El Dorado, Kern, Los Angeles, Mendocino, Napa, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Diego, San Luis Obispo, San Mateo, Santa Barbara, Santa Cruz, Tuolumne, Trinity, and Yolo. I am also seeking Hazard Mitigation statewide. California notes its Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and expires September 30, 2018.

Estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in the Enclosures, as well as estimated requirements for assistance from certain federal agencies under statutory authorities. Our estimated Public Assistance damages are expected to exceed \$112.9 million.

I certify for this Major Disaster, 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 my 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