



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
HARRISBURG

THE GOVERNOR

September 2, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Through: Ms. MaryAnn Tierney  
Regional Administrator, Region III  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
One Independence Mall, Sixth Floor  
615 Chestnut Street  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19106

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 request that you declare a major disaster for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a result of Hurricane Irene and the severe storms and flooding that has resulted from that event. Hurricane Irene began to cause impact on the evening of August 27, 2011 and continues to severely impact Pennsylvania.

As of today, at least 14 counties in Pennsylvania continue to suffer devastating effects from Hurricane Irene including flooding, power outages, road and bridge closures, and infrastructure damages. Those counties include: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Lehigh, Luzerne, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne and Wyoming Counties. The impact of Hurricane Irene has resulted in the deaths of at least six Pennsylvanians. Various counties are experiencing record flooding because of the storms and rain that accompanied Hurricane Irene. The flooding of Pennsylvania rivers and streams continue to severely impact communities. Property has been destroyed, infrastructure has been severely impacted and travel in various communities remains difficult and in some places impossible.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under commonwealth law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan on August 26, 2011, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. As a result of the expected impact and threats posed by Hurricane Irene, I signed a Declaration of Disaster Emergency on August 26, 2011. Pennsylvania has a Section 322 Complaint Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plan as is required under 44 CFR §201, that was approved by FEMA on October 21, 2010.

On August 28, 2011, I requested a joint Federal, commonwealth and local survey of the preliminary damage assessment. Preliminary Damage Assessments occurred September 1-2. As the enclosure from Wyoming County shows, the impact to thousands of people residing in Pennsylvania has been severe. DEP has had to assist with more than 60 water and wastewater facilities loss of power – which in many cases resulted in boil water advisories. Thousands of people do not have access to regular roadways and bridges. New roadways will have to be built. For the time being, temporary bridges will need to be constructed – at a significant cost. The enormous amount of public infrastructure damage far surpasses Pennsylvania's threshold of \$16,513,093. As the enclosures show, the damages currently exceed \$32,000,000. As we continue to assess damages, this figure will increase. I have determined and certify that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives and property, public health, and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a future disaster.

Not only has Hurricane Irene taken a toll on public infrastructure and private properties, but it also has resulted in the deaths of at least six Pennsylvanians. Trees falling as a result of Hurricane Irene caused the deaths of three Pennsylvanians. One fatality resulted from a tree falling into a camper crushing the occupant to death in Luzerne County. Also, in Dauphin County a tree fell on tent killing a 58 year old man. In Monroe County, tragically a son lost his father when his father saved him by pushing him out of the way of a falling tree. The father was only 44 years old when he died.

A 39 year old man in Carbon County was involved in a one car vehicle crash as a result of the weather conditions of Hurricane Irene. A power outage in Cumberland County resulted in the death of an individual who was found by a social worker during a routine visit. Further, a 64 year old woman died when her car stalled and she got out of the vehicle to walk to her destination. The woman was swept into the raging waters from Hurricane Irene related floods.

Several dams are being monitored due to rising water levels and two dams had previously been classified as being close to failure. Evacuations occurred in communities that may be affected by these potential future dam failures and the flooding that could result.

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments, and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting:

- Public Assistance for Categories A - G for the following counties: Chester, Northampton, Sullivan, Susquehanna, and Wyoming Counties.

Information is presently being gathered concerning eligibility for Public Assistance for other Pennsylvania counties. Therefore, I reserve the right to add additional counties to this request for Public Assistance at a future time.

Information concerning potential requests for Individual Assistance including the Individuals and Households Program, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, USDA food coupons and distribution, USDA food commodities, Disaster Legal Services, the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and Small Business Administration disaster loans is being gathered by the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency (PEMA)

and FEMA personnel. Due to the widespread nature of the Hurricane Irene flooding and destruction, Pennsylvania continues to assess the impact on public and private property, essential infrastructure, and eligible not for profit organizations. The ongoing flooding is likely to cause further infrastructure damage – and renders it difficult to assess the full impact of Hurricane Irene. At this stage, it is already evident that Hurricane Irene's significant impact to Pennsylvania is catastrophic. I therefore reserve the right to request additional assistance under both the Individual and Public Assistance Programs. Moreover, I fully expect to make a request for further assistance once all the damage assessments are completed.

I additionally request that all 67 counties within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania be considered for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program in order to maximize the benefit of this program.

Pennsylvania has expended significant resources in addressing the needs related to the threats posed by Hurricane Irene. 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:

- PEMA continues to communicate daily with the National Weather Service (NWS), federal, state, and county agencies, and contiguous states. The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) tested the commonwealth's 800 MHz radio system to ensure a reliable communications' platform among state and county agencies. Volunteers with Pennsylvania's Auxiliary Communications Service were placed on alert. In addition, PEMA has liaisons staged in Bucks, Monroe, Montgomery, Philadelphia and Wyoming Counties to provide expedited and more direct access to state and federal assets and has all resources moving east. All Swift Water Rescue Teams, Rapid Assessment Units, Incident Management Teams, EMS Strike Teams and ambulances, Mass Casualty Units, Pennsylvania Strike Team #1, and Pennsylvania Task Force 1 were either staged or deployed to affected areas.
- The SEOC coordinated response operations during this event with senior state officials. The SEOC has been elevated to a full Level II since August 27<sup>th</sup> and will remain mobilized as long as necessary to mitigate loss of life and property. The SEOC tested the commonwealth's 800 MHz radio system to ensure a reliable communications' platform among state and county agencies. Additionally, weather calls were conducted with the NWS, senior state officials from multiple agencies, and counties to maintain situational awareness and monitor unmet needs by municipalities.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Aging has worked with its statewide network to ensure emergency meals and appropriate plans are in place.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has been testing and checking backup generators at their facilities in case of widespread power outages. Evacuation plans were prepared for those facilities. On August 28, the emergency area command was activated. Flooding very close to the large maximum security facility SCI Graterford has caused significant resources to be dedicated to protect that facility.

- The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) has been updating its list of “dams of special concern” and has provided that information to counties and PEMA. Water levels at dams have been constantly monitored since the commonwealth’s declaration of disaster emergency. More than 60 water and wastewater plants have experienced issues related to power outages, requiring emergency generators and in many cases the issuance of Boil Water Advisories. DEP works with these facilities to assist solving the problems and to ensure the public access to potable water.
- The Department of Health (DOH) has reached out to the emergency management services region to ensure that emergency medical teams are on standby. DOH has been in contact with numerous hospitals to ensure the readiness of emergency backup generators.
- The Department of Military and Veteran Affairs (DMVA) reviewed options for staging airlift operations. Approximately 1600 Pennsylvania National Guard troops were activated to deal with the Hurricane. National Guard soldiers have been brought into Pennsylvania from Indiana and Illinois to support FEMA Region III. The Pennsylvania National Guard has been deploying personnel and equipment to save the lives of those in the commonwealth. More than 20 missions occurred. Due to the significant flooding and road and bridge damage significant forces were deployed to Wyoming County.
- Further activities of the Pennsylvania National Guard included providing MREs to those in need in Wayne County. The Guard evacuated 35 people in Bucks County (Perkasie Borough) who were in danger of being killed by rushing water. One of those evacuated was an elderly woman, who was accompanied by her required medical equipment and her husband, who is a high risk stroke victim. In Monroe County, 50 people were rescued from their mobile homes and placed in an emergency shelter located at a school. In Wyoming and Susquehanna Counties, potable water was provided to those in need. In Chester County the Guard helped to set up emergency shelters and transported 150 cots. In Philadelphia, the Guard transported power converters to shelters and transported essential personnel two emergency shelters. In Delaware County, the Guard assisted to prevent pedestrians and motorists from entering into high water flooding areas. In Montgomery County, three people were rescued from a car and nine were rescued and evacuated from a hotel where rising water threatened their safety.
- The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation (PennDOT) has been in communication with neighboring states in order to coordinate appropriate response to Hurricane Irene. PennDOT has been working on appropriate waivers with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FEMA Region III, and USDOT in order to support emergency operations. Because of significant road and bridge damages throughout Eastern Pennsylvania, PennDOT bridge engineers and maintenance personnel have been expending significant resources to determine the extent of the damage to highways. Further, personnel have spent thousands of hours of work opening roadways and making them safe for travel. The various districts maintenance units (particularly Districts 4, 5, 6 and 8) have been working on both

maintenance and engineering issues in order to keep roadways safe for travel. The flooding in certain areas makes this an ongoing challenge.

- The Public Utility Commission (PUC) has been working with the various Commonwealth utilities to coordinate planning and response to the events. In advance of the storm, the electric utility PECO requested assistance from utility crews in Chicago. On August 29, 2011, more than 700,000 Pennsylvanians were without power. Power has been restored to 1.3 million customers, but as of today more than 11,000 customers remain without power. The PUC has been working non-stop over the past days to ensure Pennsylvanians that lost utility service regain that service.

Even today, Pennsylvania remains engaged in responding to the impacts of Hurricane Irene. Flood warnings are still posted for Pennsylvania rivers and streams.

In addition to these commonwealth resources, various counties have expended resources to protect the public from the serious impacts of Hurricane Irene. Throughout the commonwealth, potential shelters, swift water rescue teams, and sources of sand bags were identified. By August 29, twenty-five emergency shelters were open to house those who could not stay home. Emergency backup generators at 911 centers and other emergency services facilities were fueled and inspected. Mayor Michael Nutter of the City of Philadelphia declared the first state of emergency in Philadelphia since 1986. The American Red Cross also provided substantial disaster assistance to those impacted in Pennsylvania. The Red Cross operated numerous shelters, provided for more than 1000 overnight stays and had 9 fixed feeding sites where people without power could get a hot meal and shower. A total of 464 members of the Red Cross (83% of them volunteers) provided aid to the Pennsylvania public during Hurricane Irene.

I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and property. In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.208, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance:

1. Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work;
2. Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work;
3. Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost 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 jurisdictional matters.

In addition, I anticipate the need for debris removal, 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 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 Glenn M. Cannon, as the Commonwealth Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with FEMA in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Corbett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

TOM CORBETT  
Governor

Enclosures



Pennsylvania's

ENCLOSURE B TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Requirements for Public Assistance Stafford Act

County	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Bucks	90,400	54,750	398,097	8,000	54,789	206,635	639,500	\$1,452,171
Chester	402,060	281,869	866,185	44,200	172,647	75,616	68,735	\$1,911,312
Delaware	150,300	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$150,300
Lehigh	39,000	141,000	655,000	0	210,000	0	16,000	\$1,061,000
Luzerne	16,415.99	11,579	0	0	0	0	0	\$27,995
Monroe	63,465	32,835	35,000	0	240,000	0	7,246	\$378,546
Montgomery	0	2,200	0	0	59,000	0	115,000	\$176,200
Northampton	290,857	337,247	231,500	50,000	4,000	25,000	941,700	\$1,880,304
Philadelphia	0	0	0	0	19,200	0	0	\$19,200
Pike	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0
Sullivan	10,000	50,700	1,367,739	0	3,500	10,500	2,400	\$1,444,839
Susquehanna	0	0	648,431	0	15,000	0	4,000	\$667,431
Wayne	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0
Wyoming	52,000	76,000	22,503,000	0	200,000	0	185,000	\$23,016,000
Statewide	95,700	341,824	0	0	0	0	0	\$437,524
Totals:	\$1,210,198	\$1,330,004	\$26,704,952	\$102,200	\$978,136	\$317,751	\$1,979,581	\$32,622,822

Pennsylvania's  
**ENCLOSURE C TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST**  
 Estimated Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs

To Be Determined

County	SBA Loans Home	SBA Loans Business	FSA Loans	NRCS	FHWA	USACE	OTHER
Bucks							
Chester							
Delaware							
Lehigh							
Luzerne							
Monroe							
Montgomery							
Northampton							
Philadelphia							
Pike							
Sullivan							
Susquehanna							
Wayne							
Wyoming							
<b>TOTAL:</b>							

**PENNSYLVANIA'S**

**ENCLOSURE D TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST**

Governor's Certification

I certify that for this current disaster, State and local government expenditures and obligations will include the non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. As stated in my basic letter, and based on information available at this time, tabulation of these estimated expenditures and obligations are as follows:

CATEGORY OF ASSISTANCE	AMOUNT	
	STATE	LOCAL
Individual Assistance:		
“Other Assistance” under the Individuals and Households Program	TBD	TBD
Other (specify):	TBD	TBD
<b>Total:</b>		<b>0</b>

Public Assistance	Costs	
Category A - Debris Removal	304,316	905,882
Category B – Emergency Protective Measures	368,803	961,201
Category C – Roads and Bridges	22,406,192	4,298,760
Category D – Water Control Facilities	0	102,200
Category E – Buildings and Equipment	93,200	884,936
Category F – Utilities	0	317,751
Category G – Other (Parks, Recreational Facilities, etc.)	1,026,500	953,081
<b>Total:</b>	24,199,011	8,423,811
<b>Grand Total:</b>		<b>32,622,822</b>

***The assistance required is a result of flood waters destroying personal property of low-income residents who have lost their furnaces, hot water heaters, personal effects, records and documents.***