



STATE OF MICHIGAN
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

GARLIN GILCHRIST II
LT. GOVERNOR

EXECUTIVE ORDER

No. 2026-1

Declaration of State of Emergency

On March 6, 2026, severe weather struck the counties of Branch, Cass, and St. Joseph, producing severe storms and four confirmed tornadoes. An EF3 tornado hit the Union Lake area with estimated winds of at least 160 miles per hour. This weather event caused at least four fatalities and multiple injuries. The storms have also caused significant damage to homes, businesses, and public infrastructure, including roadways. Though response efforts are still underway, initial damage assessments indicate that residents in these counties have suffered serious harm.

Local officials in Branch, Cass, and St. Joseph counties have responded by, among other means, issuing local state of emergency declarations and otherwise activating the emergency response and recovery aspects of their emergency operations plans. Despite these efforts, local resources have proven insufficient to address the situation. State assistance and other outside resources are necessary to recover from the impacts of this emergency, protect public health, safety, and property, and lessen or avert the threat of more severe and lasting harm.

Section 1 of article 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 vests the executive power of the State of Michigan in the governor. Under the Emergency Management Act, 1976 PA 390, as amended, MCL 30.403(4), “[t]he governor shall, by executive order or proclamation, declare a state of emergency if he or she finds that an emergency has occurred or that the threat of an emergency exists.”

Therefore, acting under the Michigan Constitution of 1963 and Michigan law, including the Emergency Management Act, 1976 PA 390, as amended, MCL 30.401 to 30.421, I order the following:

1. A state of emergency is declared for Branch, Cass, and St. Joseph counties.
2. The Emergency Management and Homeland Security Division of the Department of State Police must coordinate and maximize all state efforts and may call upon all state departments to use available resources to assist in the designated areas pursuant to the Michigan Emergency Management Plan.
3. The state of emergency is terminated at such time as the threats to public health, safety, and property caused by the emergency no longer exist, and appropriate programs have been implemented to recover from the effects of this emergency, but in

no case later than April 5, 2026, unless extended as provided by the Emergency Management Act.

Date: March 8, 2026

Time: 8:43 a.m.



GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

By the Governor

SECRETARY OF STATE