



MIKE DEWINE

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March 2, 2023

Anne Bink
Associate Administrator
Office of Response and Recovery
Federal Emergency Management Agency
500 C Street, SW
Washington, DC 20472

Through: Thomas Sivak, Regional Administrator FEMA, RV
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dear Anne,

Under the provisions of 44 C.F.R. §206.36(a), I hereby request a 120-day extension to submit a request for a major disaster declaration for the State of Ohio due to a train derailment in East Palestine in Columbiana County Ohio, on February 3, 2023. I am submitting this written request for an extension within 30 days of the occurrence of the incident for the following reasons.

On Friday February 3, 2023, a Norfolk Southern train carrying hazardous materials derailed in East Palestine. This resulted in a major fire with the East Palestine fire department and several other fire departments responding under mutual aid. On the evening of February 5, 2023, responders observed a drastic temperature change in a derailed car. Responders expressed grave concern that the increase in temperature could lead to a catastrophic tanker failure, causing an explosion with the potential of deadly shrapnel traveling up to one mile.

Local officials sent an urgent warning to those living within one mile of the derailment, encouraging residents to evacuate immediately. Throughout the night and into February 6, 2023, local officials and the Ohio State Highway Patrol went door-to-door urging residents to evacuate. The Ohio Department of Transportation blocked roads to assist in keeping the evacuated area closed to traffic.

On February 6, 2023, the State of Ohio transitioned from assessment and monitoring to partial activation ahead of the planned controlled release of chemicals in five railcars to avoid the catastrophic explosion. The controlled release started around 4:30 p.m. (EST) and lasted for approximately two hours. After conducting testing of the air and water around the crash site and the surrounding area, residents were told they could return home on February 8, 2023. Cleanup of the site continues as of this date.

Residents have reported troubling medical conditions since the derailment and are concerned the air and water were impacted by the chemicals released during this incident. In response to this, I requested that the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services come to East Palestine and work with the Ohio Department of Health to establish a clinic where residents could be examined for any potential adverse health effects resulting from the incident. I appreciate the work of the Ohio Department of Health and partners to make this clinic available for residents.

Although we previously requested and received technical assistance from FEMA to assist in incident management, I now request, due to the continuing impacts and the complexities of this incident, a 120-day extension to submit a request for a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration to properly assess the impacts of this incident.

I have designated Sima S. Merick as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. She will work with the FEMA and will provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Very respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike DeWine", with a long, sweeping underline.

Mike DeWine
Governor