



Tony Evers

Office of the Governor | State of Wisconsin

February 10, 2020

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

Through: Regional Administrator James K. Joseph
FEMA Region V
536 South Clark Street, 6th Floor
Chicago, IL 60605-1521

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 State of Wisconsin as a result of a winter storm and lakeshore flooding that occurred January 10-12, 2020. This request includes Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties for Public Assistance, and Hazard Mitigation statewide.

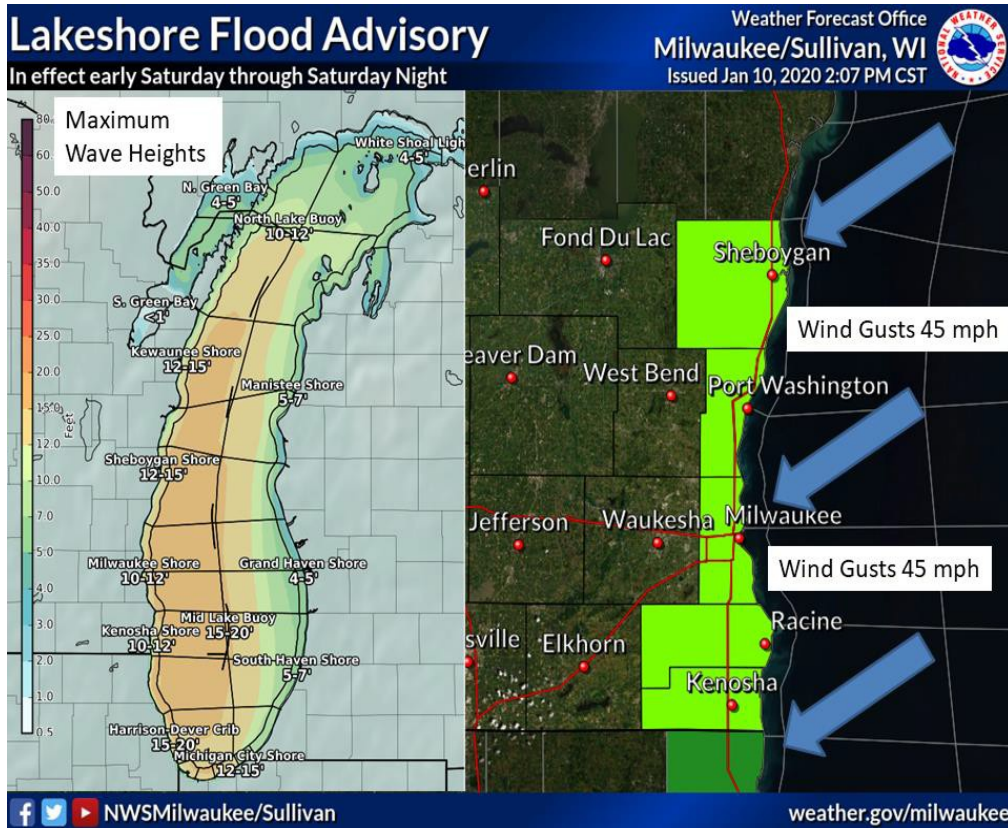
Event Summary

A large, powerful storm system worked its way across the central part of the US on the weekend of January 10 and 11, 2020. In anticipation of this storm, the National Weather Service (NWS) Milwaukee/Sullivan Office issued a winter storm advisory consisting of a wintry mix of snow, sleet, and freezing rain with the possibility of snow totals from five to ten inches in parts of Wisconsin on Saturday, January 11, 2020. The threat for flooding and possible damage increased early Saturday morning through Saturday night along the Lake Michigan shoreline from Sheboygan County in the north to Kenosha County in the south.

On the afternoon of January 10, the NWS Milwaukee/Sullivan Office issued a Lakeshore Flood Advisory for Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties, among others.

This system brought severe thunderstorms and heavy rains across the southern Midwest down to the Gulf Coast, while it brought two rounds of winter weather across southern Wisconsin. In addition to the wintry weather, strong northeasterly onshore winds developed across the area Saturday, January 11.

These strong winds with gusts over 50 mph combined with the record high Lake Michigan water levels and lack of ice coverage on the lake, brought large, battering waves into shoreline areas resulting in significant lakeshore flooding, especially for areas from Milwaukee south to Kenosha. The lakeshore flooding was so extreme because of the strength and duration of the north to northeast winds, which were oriented along the maximum fetch of the lake.



Published on: 01/10/2020 at 2:14PM

In response to the situation, I took appropriate action under state law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on January 31, 2020, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act, and issued Executive Order #68 on January 31, 2020, proclaiming that a State of Emergency existed in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties. In this Order, I directed all state agencies to assist as appropriate to support response and recovery efforts in the aforementioned counties.

Thankfully, there were no reported injuries or deaths associated with the storm and resulting lakeshore flooding.

State Agency Response

Immediately following the event and continuing through the PDAs, representatives from Wisconsin Emergency Management have been in the field assisting Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine County emergency management directors in assessing the extent of the damage.

Economic Impact

Kenosha County

On January 11-12, Kemper Center County Park was severely damaged along the Lake Michigan shoreline due to high winds and waves. The Kemper Center accessible multi-use trail allows tourists and locals to walk, bicycle, or jog along the lakefront.

Specifically, existing stone revetment along the shore consisting of approximately 2,968 tons of shoreline rock was displaced. The impact of damage stretched along 1,500 feet of shoreline in Kemper Center County Park with an average debris throwback of 41 feet off the shoreline into parking lots, roads, multi-use paths, and green space. Severe destruction occurred where voids in the revetment were created during the storm. The land mass to the east of the main Kemper Center parking lot was severely eroded and debris pushed up onto the shore. The multi-use trail asphalt was heaved, cracked, undercut, and eaten away in sections shown on the attached map. Approximately 550 feet of the trails were damaged and large parts of the multi-use path are now completely gone. Trees were uprooted, and a gazebo had minor damage as well. Temporary measures were taken to address safety issues along the multi-use trail, parking lots, and grounds. Consultants were hired by Kenosha County to assist with site restoration planning.

City of Kenosha

On January 11, 2020, the City of Kenosha experienced strong northeasterly winds with gusts exceeding 40 mph (reported by the National Weather Service). Due to the record high water levels on Lake Michigan, Kenosha experienced significant damage, shoreline loss, and flooding. The revetment structure along 1st Avenue between 71st Street and 76th Street sustained damage from the high wave action, which started to cause deterioration behind the existing revetment wall. A sinkhole started to develop, and the revetment structure has collapsed in two locations, which has left the earth behind the wall exposed and susceptible to erosion.

Damage occurred along the Kenosha Harbor walls on both the north and south sides of the channel. The waves were more than 10 feet high, which broke onto the concrete and brick promenade along the south wall causing the bricks to pop out of place and wash out along with damaging many of the recreational amenities. The promenade is closed in areas due to fall/trip hazards.

Village of Pleasant Prairie

On Friday, January 10, 2020, the Village of Pleasant Prairie declared a Snow Emergency beginning at 6:00 pm, and remaining in effect until noon on Monday, January 13, 2020. The storm brought damages and lakeshore flooding to the Prairie Shores, Chiwaukee, and South Area beaches.

Carthage College

Founded in 1847, Carthage College is located on the shore of Lake Michigan in the City of Kenosha. Carthage is a 4-year school that has 2,600 full-time undergraduate students enrolled. During the January 10-12, 2020 incident, flood waters entered one of their administration buildings, flooding the basement which housed the building's mechanicals. Carthage also suffered shoreline damage to their revetment walls.

Milwaukee County

Milwaukee County is the most populous county in the state, containing about 948,930 people over 241 square miles of land, with the City of Milwaukee at its center and Lake Michigan bordering it to the East.

On January 10, the National Weather Service (NWS) issued a Lakeshore Flood Advisory. Currently, Lake Michigan water levels are at near-record levels, about 4 feet above normal. This has resulted in flooding of roads along the lakeshore during past weather events.

This incident occurred quickly with little warning. As soon as Port Milwaukee staff were made aware, they evacuated and closed Jones Island until it was safe to reopen. Jones Island is home to Port Milwaukee and administers operations on the 467 acres that make up the Port. The Port promotes shipping and commerce throughout the region by providing access to domestic and international ships, rail, and over-the-road transportation. Port Milwaukee employs 1,309 staff and handles 2.3 million metric tons of cargo and generates \$88.1 million in income annually. Any closure or time lost at Port Milwaukee will cause disruptions to commerce the City of Milwaukee and southeastern Wisconsin.

Immediately following the event, Milwaukee County and City Emergency Management staff were on site surveying the damages. Emergency Management staff worked at Port Milwaukee along with Wisconsin Emergency Management, and other agencies to assess the extent of the damages.

Shoreline and infrastructure damage occurred at Port Milwaukee, Milwaukee Water Works Pumping Station, 14 Milwaukee County Parks locations and in the municipalities of Whitefish Bay, Fox Point, Shorewood, and Cudahy. Port Milwaukee and Jones Island experienced significant damage to sea walls, terminal buildings, roadways, and drainage systems. The Port's rail tracks were covered in ice, shutting down all railroad operations. Port Milwaukee also experienced electrical damage to lights and terminal buildings. Jones Island was closed during the event for public safety reasons. As a result, there were no health or safety problems. However, the businesses on Jones Island had to halt normal operations to survey damages and recover from flooding. In addition, the storm water system on Jones Island was flooded and manhole covers were blown off. Land subsidence occurred around the manholes.

Damage also occurred to the Linwood Water Treatment Plant's drainage system. This plant pumps water from Lake Michigan to be treated and distributed for public use.

Racine County

The City of Racine notified the Racine County Office of Emergency Management (RCOEM) on January 13 that they had experienced numerous shoreline failures along Pershing Park Drive that needed to be addressed.

Further assessment identified numerous issues along 2.5 miles of the lakeshore, stretching from Carre-Hogle Park to Zoo Beach. In addition, a park owned by the City in the Village of Wind Point incurred damages. No other municipalities besides the Village of Wind Point incurred damage to public infrastructure. RCOEM worked closely with city officials to assess the damage. At the recommendation of RCOEM, Mayor Cory Mason issued an

emergency declaration on January 15, 2020. County Executive Jonathan Delagrave followed suit on January 17, 2020, issuing a similar emergency declaration.

The City of Racine had the following damages:

Carre-Hogle Park

Approximately 200 feet of shoreline protected with breakwater stone was damaged and washed away.

Pershing Park

Lakefront storm damage at Pershing Drive resulted in concrete, stone, dirt, and gravel debris that buried all of Pershing Drive with 6 to 20 inches of material and displaced most of the smaller concrete slabs acting as shore barrier stone. 900 feet of the shoreline-protecting breakwater was damaged. Drainage systems have been compromised including bioswales, underdrains, and a 36-inch-diameter steel storm sewer outfall within the 900-foot damaged breakwater. The electronic touch screen pay kiosk for the visiting boaters at the public boat launch was also taken out of service.

Samuel Meyers Park

Samuel Myers Park is a coastal municipal park that contains a WI DNR designated public bathing beach. A supplemented breakwater, green infrastructure, and native plant/tree communities provided dual benefits for both recreation and critical species habitat. Extensive damage occurred to the bioswale, breakwater, bounding structures for the constructed wetlands (e.g. dunes), outflows (e.g. French drain system, rock lined/unlined return channels and culvert), and east/eastern extent of west wetland as well as portions of the public access components. Moderate damage was sustained by the raingarden, safety equipment, and directional/education signage. Native plant and tree communities in the affected area are a total loss.

Shoop Park

The service road at Shoop Park to access the public beach below the parking lot has extensive undermining and damage from erosion. The support embankment for the service road has been washed away.

North Beach Park

North Beach is Wisconsin's first beach to be designated as a Certified Blue Wave clean beach by the National Clean Beaches Council. Its national accolades include being counted among the Top 5 Best Freshwater Beaches (USA Today), Top 10 Family Friendly Beaches (Parents magazine), and Top City Beaches (Midwest Living magazine). A community of volunteers built the adjacent Kid's Cove nautical-themed playground and a wheelchair-accessible walkway extends across the sand to the water's edge. In 2018 visitors spent \$250 million in Racine County. In 2019, Real Racine, Racine County's Convention and Visitors Bureau, brought nine events to Racine's lakefront which generated \$1,066,540 in economic income to the local economy according to the Destinations International Event Impact Calculator. The largest of these was the Pro Watercross Midwest Tour event on July 13-14 which generated an estimated \$417,300 for the local economy. Seven of these events were sand volleyball and the last one was a Wisconsin Senior Olympics 5k along Racine's lakefront.

Event History from Past 24 Months

Unfortunately, this is not the only recent event to draw on the resources and capacity of the state and its counties. In the previous 24 months, the State of Wisconsin has been impacted by several events that have required response by resources from the State and one or more counties.

On Friday, June 15, 2018, multiple rounds of severe thunderstorms impacted much of Wisconsin, hitting northwest and west central Wisconsin particularly hard. A line of thunderstorms moved through parts of the region during the late afternoon and evening of June 15, producing large hail, damaging winds, and torrential rain over northwest Wisconsin. A second line of thunderstorms hit the northern half of the state during the day on Saturday, June 16, and overnight into Sunday, June 17, producing additional flooding in the northwest portion of the state. Record crests occurred on some rivers in Wisconsin including the Nemadji River at Superior (31.06'), Whittlesy Creek at Ashland (7.52'), the White River at Ashland (9.91'), and the St. Croix River at Danbury (11.66'). The Town of Drummond in Bayfield County received 15.04 inches of rain over those three days. Wisconsin's previous governor requested, and Wisconsin received, a Public Assistance Federal Disaster Declaration, DR-4383, for six counties in west central and northern Wisconsin.

On Friday, August 17, 2018, a noted change in weather patterns occurred which marked the beginning of multiple rounds of severe weather and flooding across Wisconsin. Until mid-August, Wisconsin had seen normal to below-normal precipitation for the summer months. Starting on Friday, August 17, a very warm and moist air-mass set up across much of Wisconsin and then persisted through the first week in September. A series of storm systems moving through this pattern cause multiple rounds of severe weather and flooding across portions of Wisconsin and followed it with longer-term river flooding as well. The first of these systems moved through southern Wisconsin on Friday, August 17, and put down a large swath of heavy rainfall. Each event where heavy rain fell helped to set conditions for additional flooding to occur. The most widespread severe weather day was August 28, 2018, when 19 tornadoes and widespread damaging winds of 90-110 mph occurred from central Wisconsin through east central Wisconsin. The last of the series of storm systems came through on Wednesday, September 5, and the last river in southern Wisconsin to recede below major flood stage did so on Friday, September 14. Record crests occurred on some rivers in Wisconsin including the Baraboo River at La Valle (25.2') and Reedsburg (21.85'), and the Kickapoo River at Viola (25.7'), Readstown (23.7'), Gays Mills (22.31') and Steuben (20.5'). Wisconsin's previous governor requested, and Wisconsin received, a Public Assistance Federal Disaster Declaration, DR-4402, for 14 counties in east central, southeast, southwest, and west central regions in Wisconsin. The previous governor also requested and received an Individual Assistance Federal Disaster Declaration, DR-4402, for 10 counties in east central, south east, southwest, and west central regions in Wisconsin.

A warm, humid air mass, combined with a frontal boundary created prime conditions for two-and-a-half days of extremely severe weather in Wisconsin from Thursday, July 18 through Saturday, July 20, 2019. During this time, the northern half of the state was impacted by an intense weather system which produced three lines of severe storms in succession. These storms resulted in 17 confirmed tornadoes, severe straight-line winds, large hail, and heavy rains.

From the evening of July 18 through the morning hours of July 19, strong severe storms developed across parts of southeast Minnesota and western Wisconsin. The slow-moving storms produced at least one tornado in Vernon County and torrential rain. Flash flooding, with four to six inches of rain falling across La Crosse, Vernon, and Monroe counties, led to mudslides, damaged roads, and rapid rises in area rivers. Because of the warm, humid air in place across Wisconsin following the initial line of storms, additional storm lines followed, developing over western Wisconsin.

Only hours later in the evening of July 19, a line of severe thunderstorms producing several embedded tornadoes moved across much of central, north central, and eastern Wisconsin. The worst damage was associated with a macroburst from Oneida County toward the southeast, through Langlade and Oconto counties. This large downburst of straight-line winds and the associated storm system caused widespread tree and power line damage from central Wisconsin to the Lake Michigan shore. Straight-line winds of at least 100 miles per hour snapped or uprooted hundreds of thousands of trees, resulting in extensive damages to homes and cottages in the region.

Another line of severe thunderstorms moved across the central and east-central portions of Wisconsin again during the late morning and early afternoon hours of July 20. Rain, straight-line winds and six tornadoes uprooted and snapped additional trees. Widespread damages were reported from Wood and Portage counties into the Fox Valley and Lake Michigan shore. With the massive amount of tree debris, the most prevalent damages were to power lines and structures.

I requested and Wisconsin Received a Public Assistance Federal Disaster Declaration, DR-4459, for 18 counties and 2 tribes in east central, northeast, northwest, southwest, and west central regions in Wisconsin.

In the past year alone, local applicants reached the federal fiscal year 2019 damage indicator of \$3.78 or the federal fiscal year 2020 damage indicator of \$3.84 per capita on 11 separate occasions, making them eligible to receive assistance from the Wisconsin Disaster Fund to include:

- Flooding in Adams, Brown, Calumet, Chippewa, Columbia, Dodge, Dunn, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Iowa, Kewaunee, La Crosse, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Marathon, Ozaukee, Polk, Portage, Sauk, Trempealeau, Waupaca, and Waushara counties starting on March 13, 2019
- Flooding in Clark, Dunn, Grant, Marathon, Marinette, and Portage counties starting on April 16, 2019
- Flash flooding in Grant County on June 30, 2019
- Tornado in Polk County on July 28, 2019
- Flooding in Clark County on August 5, 2019
- Flooding in Crawford, Grant, Lafayette, Rock, and Walworth counties on September 11, 2019
- Flooding in Grant County on September 19, 2019
- Severe weather and tornadoes in Chippewa, Dunn, and Vilas counties on September 24, 2019
- Flooding in Columbia, Douglas, Fond du Lac, Grant, Iowa, Jefferson, and Sawyer counties on September 28, 2019

- Lakeshore flooding in Door County on November 27, 2019
- Lakeshore flooding in Oconto County on December 30, 2019

In those events, the State will be assisting county and local governments in recouping some of their costs through the Wisconsin Disaster Fund and the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's Disaster Damage Aids program. Current eligible damage requests for the Wisconsin Disaster Fund total close to \$3.1 million, without including the damages from this event. This illustrates the State's commitment to helping those in need, but without the assistance of the federal government it will be very difficult for the citizens of the state to recover and move forward.

Preliminary Damage Assessment

Kenosha County – Verified damages in Kenosha County currently amount to \$3,310,750. Of the three counties, Kenosha has reported the highest countywide damage per capita loss at \$19.89.

- 99% of Kenosha County damages occurred in Category G.

Racine County – Verified damages in Racine County currently amount to \$2,585,121, resulting in a high damage per capita amount of \$13.23.

- 63% of the damages occurred primarily in Category G; additional damages occurred in all categories except B.

Milwaukee County – Verified damages in Milwaukee County currently amount to \$4,140,596, resulting in a high damage indicator of \$4.37.

- 92% of Milwaukee County damages occurred in Category G.

On January 28, 2020, I requested a joint federal, state, and local survey of damaged areas. The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) for Public Assistance (PA) was conducted February 4-6, 2020. Teams surveyed damages for PA in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties. We appreciate the assistance in the assessment process from the three assessment teams, and other personnel and support staff that FEMA provided to conduct the PDAs.

Public Assistance PDA Results

I request that the Public Assistance program be made available in Kenosha, Milwaukee, and Racine counties.

I request that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program be made available statewide. The state has a FEMA-approved Enhanced State Hazard Mitigation Plan.

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

I have designated Dr. Darrell L. Williams as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will coordinate with the Federal Emergency Management Agency for damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

In closing, I want to reaffirm the urgency of this request and emphasize the need to assist municipalities and counties as quickly as possible so that life can return to normal. I therefore respectfully request that you review this documentation and act quickly to declare a major disaster for the State of Wisconsin.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tony Evers". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "T" and "E".

Tony Evers
Governor

Attached: OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
Enclosure B: Public Assistance