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(Neb.)-Governor Heineman Requests Federal Disaster Declaration



By: Roxie Graham-Marski Posted at: 11/18/2013 09:38 AM

(LINCOLN)-Gov. Dave Heineman today has submitted a formal request for a Major Disaster Declaration to the President through the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region VII in the wake of severe weather including tornados, a blizzard and flash floods that occurred in nine Nebraska counties Oct. 2-6.

"These storms caused millions of dollars in damage in both public infrastructure and losses to the private sector," said Gov. Heineman. "Approval of this disaster request would significantly help Nebraskans in their recovery process."

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency's (NEMA) preliminary damage estimates to public infrastructure exceed \$3 million. NEMA indicated the most severe impacts have been to electrical infrastructure, roads and bridges, along with extensive tree damage in the panhandle.

Gov. Heineman is requesting that President Barack Obama declare a major declaration of emergency for public assistance. Public assistance is being requested to help local, state and tribal governments, as well as some nonprofit organizations in the nine counties, which include Adams, Dawes, Dixon, Howard, Sheridan, Sherman, Sioux, Thurston and Wayne.

Public assistance can help with eligible costs to remove storm debris, take emergency protective measures and repair or replace disaster-damaged roads, bridges, public buildings, critical facilities, such as water, sewer and power systems, and other public facilities. The request also includes a Hazard Mitigation request for the entire state.

NEMA Assistant Director Al Berndt said, "Recovery will be a long-term process for these counties because of the severity of the damage. NEMA will work closely with local governments to help speed up the recovery process."

The Governor's request will be reviewed by the FEMA regional office in Kansas City before being forwarded to the White House for a decision.

--Nebraska Emergency Management Agency