



**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE**  
**OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

CHRISTOPHER T. SUNUNU  
Governor

June 10, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Lori A. Ehrlich  
Regional Administrator  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
Federal Emergency Management Agency Region I  
220 Binney Street  
Cambridge, MA 02142

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 respectfully request that a major disaster be declared for the State of New Hampshire. This request is due to impacts from severe winter storms and flooding from April 3-April 5, 2024, that overwhelmed State and local resources, requiring an immediate and urgent response, and resulted in damages being validated through the Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process in Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, Sullivan, and Strafford counties.

I, hereby request a designation of the full Public Assistance Program for Belknap, Carroll, Coos, Grafton, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan counties, and a statewide designation of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

As a direct result of the incident, debris removal and emergency protective measures were taken to protect life and property, and considerable damage to the utility infrastructure was observed due to the combined impacts of the major long duration nor'easter. These damages presented a hazard to the public, while limiting travel on roadways, as well as obstacles for first responders in preserving public health and safety. The nor'easter left thousands of residents trapped in their homes, and in some cases, prevented access by emergency personnel. The impact of the response to this event was felt throughout the local mutual aid and state systems as personnel and assets were diverted to the incident area.

A Weather Impact Summary, which has additional information, was requested, and received from the National Weather Service (NWS) and has been provided as an enclosure to this letter. The State of New Hampshire began to see impacts from the strong low-pressure system on April 3,

2024, through the following weekend. NWS Gray described the event as a “major long duration nor’easter,” and its impacts were certainly felt as such.

On April 4, the Department of Safety Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEM) conducted several weather briefings with NWS Gray, Maine, due to the anticipated impacts of the system. NH HSEM hosted three different calls, first with the Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), next with the Emergency Management Directors from local communities, and lastly with public and non-public school officials across the state.

NWS Gray utilizes a scale from none to extreme to denote the anticipated impacts of an approaching storm and gives a percentage of its confidence in the forecast. Prior to the start of the storm, NWS Gray forecast the wind, marine conditions, and coastal flooding were going to be the greatest impacts with a 75% percent confidence in its forecast. The initial briefing package described the storm as “multi-faceted,” which proved to be accurate.

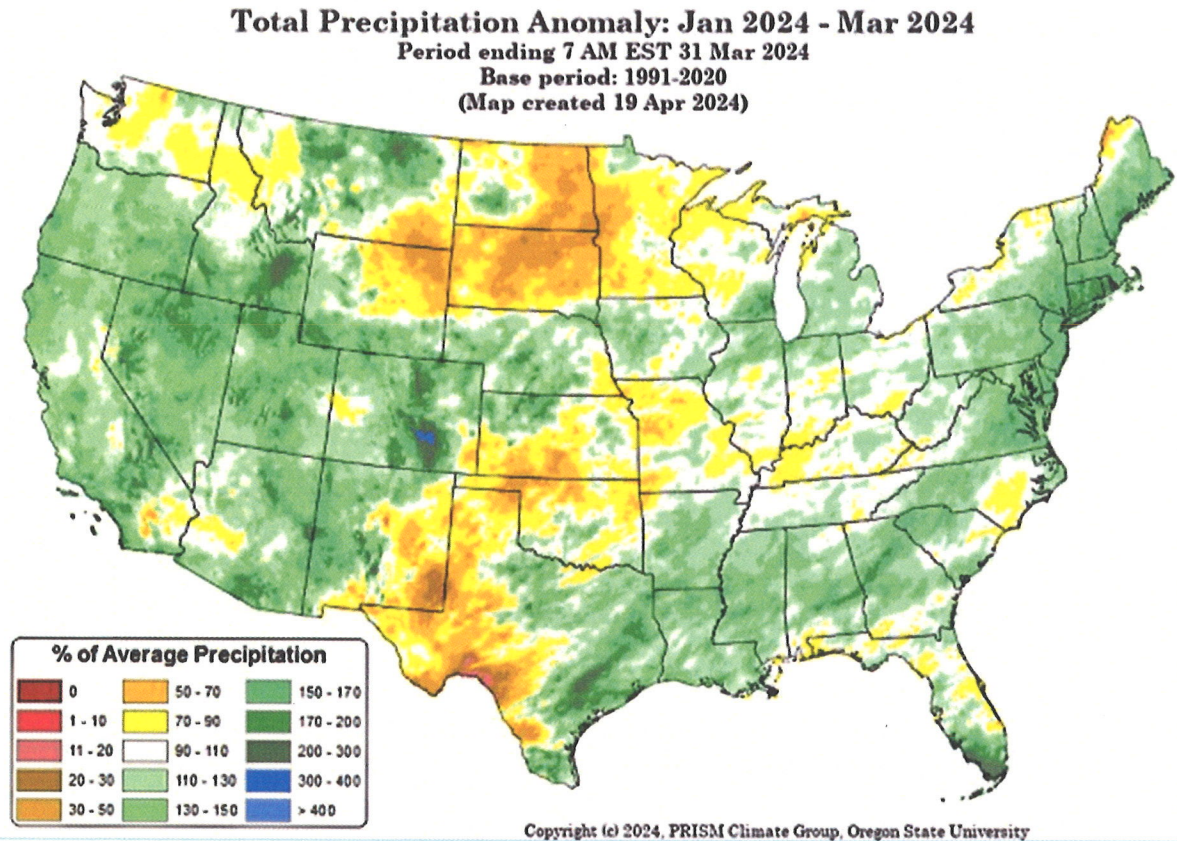
Weather briefings throughout the duration of the incident period continued to provide new and valuable information to stakeholders. In a briefing issued on April 3, 2024, NWS Gray provided several key messages, “Long duration storm with significant heavy snow accumulations, especially away from the coast.” NWS Gray reiterated that they were certain of heavy snow accumulations and strong, gusty east-northeast winds but were unsure of snowfall totals and the snow character. NH HSEM issued several news releases highlighting the continued impacts the State of New Hampshire experienced.

In the Weather Impact Summary provided by the NWS, they stated, “The system brought a prolonged period of heavy, wet snow along with strong winds which combined to produce significant tree damage, major travel disruption, and widespread power outages across areas of New Hampshire”. Snowfall totals varied, wind gusts were observed between 40-55 miles per hour, and there was also minor coastal flooding. Additional data is captured within the Weather Impact Summary, which highlights coastal/tidal hydrographs, coastal/tidal flooding reports, wind damage reports, maximum wind speed measurements, and snowfall measurements.

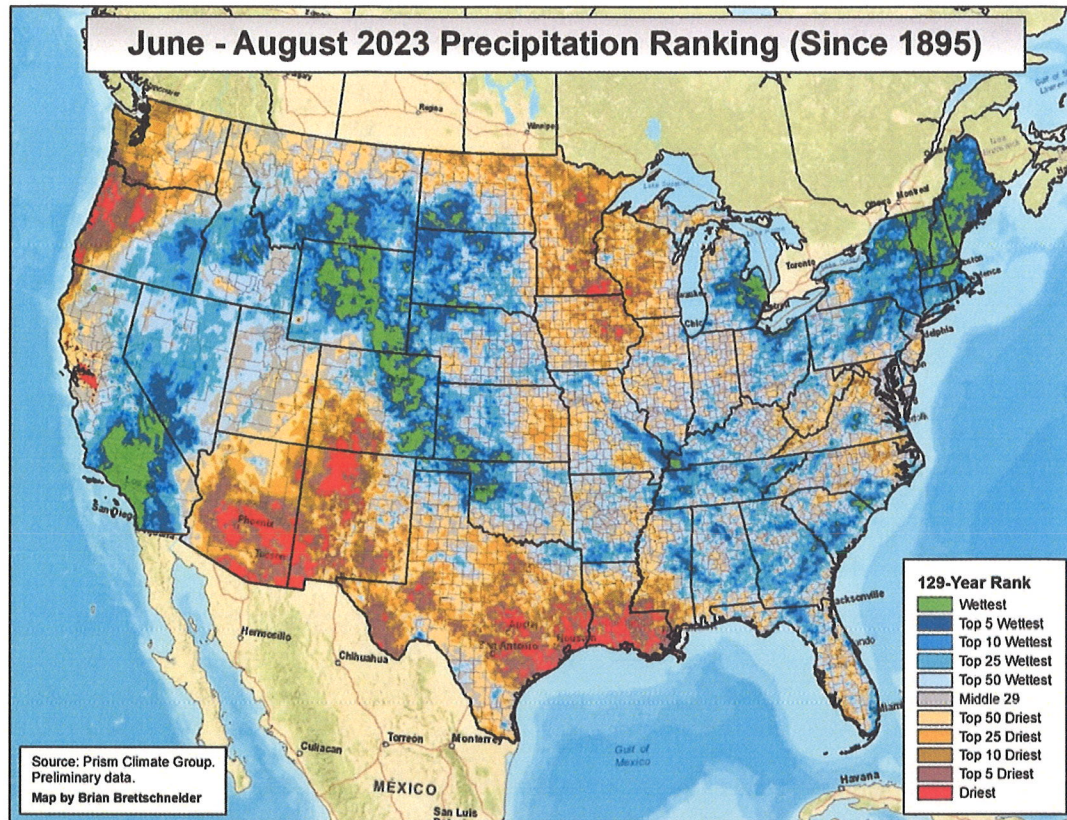
In January 2024, NWS Gray posted on their social media website a graphic highlighting the total precipitation from December 1, 2023, to January 15, 2024. Within the post, NWS Gray stated that the City of Concord (Merrimack County) had recorded its wettest first half of winter, which includes both rainfall and liquid equivalent of snowfall of 10.87 inches. Prior to 2024, the next closest record was in 1937 where the total precipitation was 8.92 and after that was 1974 with a total 8.59.

In June 2024, NWS Gray posted on their social media website a graphic, highlighting the Spring 2024 climate summary. This summary was for meteorological spring which runs from March 1 to May 31 which encompass the dates of this request. The City of Concord (Merrimack County) recorded its 6<sup>th</sup> warmest and 7<sup>th</sup> wettest spring of record since 1868. The City received nearly an additional 5 inches of rain and an additional 5 inches of snowfall compared to the average. The State of New Hampshire continues to see significant impacts from these types of incidents which are later mentioned within the localized impacts.

The below chart was made available by Oregon State University and included within a presentation by NWS Gray, highlights the total precipitation anomaly from January to March 2024. It is evident that the State of New Hampshire received anywhere from 130 to 200 percent above average precipitation.



These precipitation conditions are significant due to the totality of precipitation that was experienced throughout the entire 2023 calendar year. The State of New Hampshire was ranked the number one wettest in precipitation. The results of such a large amount of precipitation have caused an incredible strain on resources across the state. The nor'easter presented an additional strain on a first responder community that has worked diligently to maintain safety and security for the residents of New Hampshire.



NH HSEM staff began the Initial Damage Assessments (IDAs) on April 11, 2024. Based on IDAs reported by local communities and state agencies, the Director of HSEM Robert M. Buxton, requested the Joint PDA process on April 25, 2024, and they began on May 6, 2024.

On April 29, NH HSEM staff and FEMA Region I Recovery staff completed a coordinating call discussing the onset of the Joint PDAs. It is important to note that when this meeting was conducted, NH HSEM staff were coordinating the Applicant Briefings for the Major Disaster Declaration FEMA-4771-DR-NH that was approved on April 19, 2024. This was the second Major Disaster Declaration the State of New Hampshire has received in calendar year 2024.

The Joint PDAs were requested for the following counties: Belknap, Carroll, Cheshire, Coos, Grafton, Hillsborough, Merrimack, Rockingham, Strafford, and Sullivan. Nearly 20 Joint PDAs were completed that captured damages in eight different counties. From data collected during the IDA process that the State of New Hampshire completed, it was believed that the statewide indicator to access the Public Assistance Grant Program would be surpassed.

Current local and state damages have been validated and exceed the State indicator of \$2,534,653 (\$1.84 per capita). It is understood that the figures captured in Enclosure B reflect uninsured losses and the overall costs were significantly higher. The Joint PDAs validated damages to Category A - Debris Removal, Category B - Emergency Protective Measures, Category E - Buildings & Equipment, and Category F - Public Utility. At the time of this request, through the Joint PDAs, \$6,766,499 (\$4.91 per capita) has been validated in eligible Public Assistance damages. Joint PDAs will be requested to continue for Grafton County.

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Emergency protective measures were widespread throughout the entire incident period. Multiple types of emergency responses were performed in several different locations throughout the incident period:

- Nearly 40% of entities that completed an Initial Damage Assessment with NH HSEM reported that they had individuals cut off from critical services. Many of the responses from local public safety officials were even able to provide an accurate estimate of individuals cut off from critical services due to the changing conditions at the time of the incident.
- On April 4, in East Kingston (Rockingham County) the Fire Department responded to a residence where a tree had fallen onto it and injured an individual. In Farmington (Strafford County) the Fire Department responded to a residence where a tree had fallen onto it and injured an individual. In Belmont (Belknap County) the Fire Department responded to a residence where a tree had fallen onto it and it was unknown if anyone was injured at the time of the call. It is important to note that these are just a few examples. HSEM was made aware of many other similar type of weather events across numerous communities.
- On April 4, in Hampton (Rockingham County) the Fire Department was alerted to floodwaters that were rushing over the causeway on Route 1.

Unfortunately, there was one death recorded by the NH Department of Justice, Office of the Chief Medical Examiner (OCME) during the date range of April 3-April 5, 2024, that was related to the severe winter storm and flooding that occurred.

**NH Electric Co-Op (NHEC), Multiple Counties** | Due to the impacts from the incident period, NHEC experienced damages to Category B - Emergency Protective Measures and Category F – Public Utilities. NHEC in their impact statement to NH HSEM stated the weather impacts were substantial, in fact the scale of damage from this incident surpassed the 1998 ice storm that resulted in FEMA-DR1199-NH. This most recent incident resulted in downed trees and limbs causing damage to their distribution system, including approximately 180 broken poles and damages to conductors and other equipment. At the peak of the incident, approximately 50,000 NHEC customers were without power. The timing of this incident in mid-winter made it especially impactful due to loss of heat, well water, and other essential services. The total solar eclipse compounded logistics for feeding and housing utility crews and placed a greater need on a speedy restoration of services to ensure the anticipated influx of tourists to the area had essential services available and clear routes for first responders. Prolonged power outages during this time of the year can be devastating, so restoration efforts must move efficiently. At the time of this request, NHEC had \$6,038,626 in validated damages through the Joint PDAs.

**Freedom, Carroll County** | Due to impacts from the incident period, the Town sustained damages to Category A - Debris Removal. The Town reported that individuals were cut off from critical services due to the severe winter storm and flooding damages caused throughout the incident period but were unable to quantify exactly how many or for how long. The Town sustained impacts to nearly 20 roadways throughout the community and some roads were closed until after April 10, 2024. When the Joint PDA was completed, there were eight staff working that day several of whom were out clearing ditches. The Town reported that 38 truckloads of debris was removed due to impacts from the incident. At the time of this request, the Town had \$142,795 (\$84.54 per capita) in validated damages through the Joint PDAs.

**Ossipee, Carroll County** | Due to impacts from the incident period, the Town sustained damages to Category A - Debris Removal and Category B - Emergency Protective Measures. The Town reported that individuals were cut off from critical services due to the severe winter storm and flooding damages caused throughout the incident period but were unable to quantify exactly how many or for how long. Critical emergency services were impacted too when two medical calls were dispatched during the incident, one of which was for a pregnant individual and the road was discovered to be impassible. Three town owned vehicles were damaged. In one area of the Town, nearly 100 trees came down within a one mile stretch of road. The Town also calculated that between 150,000 and 200,000 cubic feet of brush required management. The Town temporarily staged the brush on a baseball field and parking lot due to the magnitude of damage sustained. At the time of this request, the Town had \$325,606 (\$74.48 per capita) in validated damages through the Joint PDAs.

**Effingham, Carroll County** | Due to impacts from the incident period, the Town sustained damages to Category A - Debris Removal and Category B - Emergency Protective Measures. The Town reported that approximately 1,500 individuals were cut off from critical services due to the severe winter storm and flooding damages caused throughout the incident period but were unable to quantify exactly how many or for how long. During the Joint PDA, the Town reported that because of the incident the community was cut in half from critical services. Communication towers and generators failed and dispatch services for the community were impacted. The Fire Station also sustained damage from a tree falling onto it but was able to remain open and operational. A shelter was opened within the community for three days and had approximately a half dozen people stay within it. At the time of this request, the Town had \$64,622 (\$38.22 per capita) in validated damages through the Joint PDAs.

**Kingston, Rockingham County** | Due to impacts from the incident period, the Town sustained damages to Category A - Debris Removal and Category B - Emergency Protective Measures. The Town reported that approximately 300 individuals were cut off from critical services due to the severe winter storm and flooding damages caused throughout the incident period but were unable to quantify exactly how many or for how long and five residences were even displaced. The Town opened their EOC and received 40 incident related calls in 36 hours. The Town called in four extra personnel to assist and a shelter was put on standby within the local school. The Fire Department operated on generator power for several days because of the incident. At the time of this request, the Town had \$61,377 (\$9.90 per capita) in validated damages through the Joint PDAs.

Only four Individual Assistance requests from residents have been managed by the State of New Hampshire with the assistance from 211 NH. NH Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD) is being utilized to assist with coordinating assistance, where appropriate. NH VOAD coordinated with Team Rubicon who was able to respond and assist a resident in Moultonborough with debris removal. Impacts are not enough for the State of New Hampshire to have requested the Individual Assistance programs through FEMA. NH HSEM has been in regular communication with the United States Small Business Administration regarding the opportunity of pursuing a Rural Agency Declaration should a Public Assistance declaration be granted.

Pursuant to the intensity of this severe winter storm and flooding, from April 3-April 5, 2024, I executed the State Emergency Operations Plan (SEOP) with the activation of the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC). While I did not declare a State of Emergency in New Hampshire, the nature and amount of State and local governmental resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster are as follows:

1. The SEOP was executed on April 3, 2024, and I instructed the Director of NH HSEM to prepare activation of the SEOC. At 0800 hours on April 4, 2024, the SEOC opened at an Enhanced Monitoring activation level. The SEOC transitioned to a Partial activation level at 1200 hours on April 4, 2024. The SEOC was activated to monitor the situation, coordinate state response activities and to respond to local requests for assistance and resources, if necessary. The SEOC returned to Steady State as of 1700 hours on April 6, 2024. The SEOC did reopen on April 7 due to the total solar eclipse and SEOC personnel were prepared to continue assisting with any outstanding needs from the nor'easter.

The Director was in contact with the appropriate Emergency Support Function (ESF) lead agencies to ensure an adequate and timely response to the needs of our state, should a need have been identified. NH HSEM utilizes WebEOC, which allowed state and local agencies to log requests or actions taken because of the incident.

A total of 17 communities activated their local emergency operations centers to coordinate their response efforts, assess damages, monitor road closures, and respond to emergency calls for service.

A total of 17 mission task requests were entered into WebEOC due to needs in local communities. These requests varied from the Town of Effingham (Carroll County) indicating a need of support for sheltering within their community and multiple communities requesting support in clearing debris from roadways and re-energizing utilities to certain customers due to extenuating circumstances such as medical needs. The SEOC Mission Task Coordinator handled these requests with the appropriate ESFs.

Though at the State level Community Lifelines remained green throughout the entirety of the incident, individual communities were unable to maintain a green status for their individual lifelines. Impacts were experienced in all eight of the Community Lifelines.

Power outages and the associated impacts were monitored by staff in the SEOC. The outages peaked on April 4, 2024, around 2PM with over 175,000 outages reported across the four utility companies. A news release was issued due to these conditions.

Before and after the SEOC activation, the NH HSEM Duty Officer remained on an on-call basis 24/7, to coordinate the needs of local communities during the recovery phase.

2. ESFs that were coordinated with during the activation included: Transportation (ESF 1), Communications & Alerting (ESF 2), Public Works and Engineering (ESF 3), Emergency Management (ESF 5), Mass Care, Housing, and Human Services (ESF 6), Health and Medical (ESF 8), Energy (ESF 12), Law Enforcement (ESF 13), Volunteer Management (ESF 14), and Public Information (ESF 15).

3. The NH DOT coordinated transportation, public works, and engineering needs across the state. Numerous roads across the state required debris removal and repairs to infrastructure.

The NH DOT Division of Operations Bureau of Transportation Systems, Management & Operations (TSMO) maintains 24/7 staffing to address needs immediately as they arise within the State. Between the hours of midnight on April 3, 2024, and midnight on April 5, 2024, staff answered over 1,300 phone calls and more than 6,250 radio communications. Two days during the incident period, 10 staff were utilized and on the third day six staff were utilized to maintain adequate staffing levels. There were an additional six district offices that supported the operations throughout the event. Their data is not represented within the previous information.

In total, more than 325 roads were logged in WebEOC as having been impacted during the incident period. The road closure board in WebEOC documents impacts to both local and state roadways and is monitored by the NHTSMO and the SEOC.

4. From April 3, 2024-April 5, 2024, the Department of Safety, Division of Emergency Services and Communications (DESC) answered 5,105 calls to 911, which is over 30% more for the same timeframe in 2023. Extreme call volume days were recorded on April 4 where more than 1,600 calls were answered in a single day. DESC had 48.25 hours of overtime to ensure that staffing was adequate to handle the storm-related calls to the Public Safety Answering Points.

Additionally, DESC assisted with several different mission task requests. Multiple different NH Alerts messages were sent to the Town of Wolfeboro (Carroll County) advising residents of sheltering activities occurring within their community. DESC also dealt with numerous disruptions to communications equipment throughout the state. These disruptions were due to the extended power outages, especially in more remote areas, resulting in backup generators running out of fuel. These communications issues disrupted locations which provide critical emergency services such as law enforcement dispatch for New Hampshire State Police and New Hampshire Fish and Game.

5. The SEOC maintained situational awareness of the sheltering needs within the State of New Hampshire. A mission task request was fulfilled by ESF 6 to assist in providing sheltering supplies, food, and water supplies, and staffing at a shelter which was opened for several days in the Town of Effingham (Carroll County).
6. The American Red Cross was prepared to provide support and resources for unmet sheltering needs within the state, should the need have arisen.

NH Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public Health Services Bureau of Emergency Preparedness, Response and Recovery was prepared to assist with making phone calls to individuals with immediate needs who were impacted by this incident.

7. New Hampshire State Police between 1600 hours on April 3, 2024 and 1300 hours on April 5, 2024 responded to 223 crashes/vehicles off the road, 31 disabled motorists, and 63 calls for trees/wires down.



8. The Department of Energy, which is the lead state agency for ESF 12, had numerous mission task requests throughout the incident period. One of the most critical tasks that ESF 12 supported in collaboration with ESF 8 was the need to address a power supply issue to a hospital within Carroll County. The hospital reported that the generators were operational, but there was a problem within the facility not allowing heat to flow in critical areas including the operating rooms. The State of New Hampshire relies on critical access hospitals to provide services in remote areas especially when critical services such as air medical transportation are not available. ESF 12 worked with the utility provider to ensure the power was restored within a reasonable time.

The State of New Hampshire continues to manage the recovery efforts for disasters, straining state, and local resources. The following is a list of active disasters that the State of New Hampshire continues to work toward close out: FEMA-4329-DR (July 1, 2017-July 2, 2017, Severe Storm and Flooding in Coos and Grafton Counties), FEMA-4355-DR (October 29, 2017-November 1, 2017, Severe Storm and Flooding in Belknap, Carroll, Coos, Grafton, Merrimack, and Sullivan Counties), FEMA-4370-DR (March 2, 2018-March 8, 2018, Coastal Storm and Flooding in Rockingham County), FEMA-4457-DR (July 11, 2019-July 12, 2019, Severe Storm and Flooding in Grafton County), FEMA-4516-DR (January 20, 2020-May 11, 2023, COVID-19 statewide), FEMA-4622-DR (July 17, 2021-July 19, 2021, Severe Storm and Flooding in Cheshire County), FEMA-4624-DR (July 29, 2021-August 2, 2021, Severe Storm and Flooding in Cheshire and Sullivan Counties), FEMA-4693-DR (December 22, 2022-December 25, 2022, Severe Storm and Flooding in Belknap, Carroll, Coos, and Grafton Counties), FEMA-4740-DR (July 9, 2023-July 17, 2023, Severe Storm and Flooding in Belknap, Carroll, Coos, Cheshire, Grafton, Rockingham, and Sullivan Counties), FEMA-4761-DR (December 17-December 21, 2023, Severe Storm and Flooding in Carroll, Coos, and Grafton Counties), and FEMA-4771-DR (January 9, 2024-January 14-2024, Severe Storms and Flooding in Grafton and Rockingham Counties).

Calendar year 2023 was an extremely impactful year on state and local resources due to several serious weather events. The State of New Hampshire submitted a disaster declaration for eight counties due to a severe winter storm and snowstorm that impacted communities from March 13, 2023-March 15, 2023. At the initial conclusion of Joint PDAs more than \$2,649,138 in damages were validated by FEMA. In late December 2023, I received notice that the original decision of a denial was upheld despite the submission of an appeal by our state.

On July 28, 2023, I submitted a major disaster declaration request due to severe storm and flooding that impacted communities on April 30-May 1, 2023. Though we did not exceed the Statewide indicator, the local impacts in communities especially within Carroll County were substantial. The Town of Ossipee (Carroll County) had a total of \$1,188,207 in validated damages, \$271.78 per capita and the Town of Madison had a total of \$116,215 in validated damages, \$45.31 per capita. FEMA issued a denial of this major disaster declaration request, too.

The State of New Hampshire maintains a State Hazard Mitigation Plan that was approved and adopted on September 27, 2023, under the 2023 State Mitigation Planning Policy Guide issued by FEMA. This updated plan outlines an over-arching goal to identify how climate change impacts natural hazards, as well as mitigation strategies. The plan addresses the impacts of the ever-

changing frequency, timing, location, and extent of inland flooding. Additionally, the plan added a section that addresses high hazard potential dam vulnerabilities.

The impacts from the April 3, 2024-April 5, 2024, severe winter storm and flooding could have been more severe if mitigation work was not previously accomplished. The State of New Hampshire, in collaboration with the FEMA, has had progressing success in making use of available funds via Section 404 mitigation programs. Since Tropical Storm Irene (August 28, 2011), the State of New Hampshire has utilized over \$18,900,000 in Section 404 funding toward mitigation projects throughout the State.

The State remains committed to pursuing funding available through Hazard Mitigation Assistance (HMA) programs including the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) and Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC). Both HMGP and BRIC share a common goal of increasing the resiliency of the towns within our State. For example, in February 2023, the State submitted applications under the Notice of Funding Opportunity for BRIC Federal Fiscal Year 2023 in the amount of \$1,583,793.32, which includes several projects and local hazard mitigation plan updates. Furthermore, the State applied under HMGP 4693 for the sum of \$191,086 and over \$6.5 million in applications under the Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams program. Furthermore, through the FEMA Public Assistance Program, the State strongly encourages communities to participate in Section 406 mitigation programs. Since 2021, more than \$2.25 million has been added to project worksheets through the Section 406 mitigation program. Mitigation continues to be an important conversation that takes place with communities early in the recovery process.

Given the severity and magnitude of this natural disaster and the events that have transpired from the April 3, 2024-April 5, 2024, incident and since then, Federal assistance is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state and local governments to recover from disaster related losses. Additionally, as required by 44 CFR § 206.36 (c)(5), I certify that all state and local government obligations and expenditures for the current disaster will comply with all applicable cost sharing requirements of the Stafford Act.

For New Hampshire local jurisdictions, the greatest remaining unmet recovery need associated with this severe winter storm and flooding is financial assistance to help avoid economic shock to businesses and families through local property taxes. Without federal assistance, the ability of the communities within the State of New Hampshire to recover in a timely manner and avoiding long-term economic damage is severely hindered.

Thank you for your consideration of this Major Disaster Declaration Request. I look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact me or my staff with any questions.

Sincerely,



Christopher T. Sununu  
Governor

Enclosures: OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13  
B: Estimated Stafford Act Requirements for Public Assistance  
C: Estimated Assistance from Other Federal Agency Programs  
National Weather Service, Weather Impact Summary