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Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam Asks for Federal Disaster Declaration to Assist 12 Counties Recovering from Memorial Weekend Storms

NASHVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee Gov. Bill Haslam today requested President Donald Trump declare a major disaster in Tennessee from the severe storms and straight-line winds of May 27, and May 28, 2017, in order to make federal assistance available for recovery efforts in the State’s impacted city and county jurisdictions.

“Community leaders, emergency managers, first responders, local officials and non-profits across Tennessee have worked tirelessly to help their neighbors recover from the impacts of the severe storms,” Haslam said. “I believe we have demonstrated to federal officials the need for assistance exists and if granted will lessen some of the financial burden on local governments and utilities that have stretched their resources in storm response and recovery efforts.”

Gov. Haslam’s request specifically asks for federal Public Assistance, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to be available to 12 of the Tennessee counties impacted during the May 27 and May 28 storms.

FEMA’s Public Assistance program reimburses local and state governments, and certain private, nonprofit organizations, for work or repairs for debris removal, emergency protective measures, roads and bridges, water control facilities, buildings and equipment, utilities, and recreational facilities.

The Public Assistance request includes the counties of: Blount, Cumberland, Fayette, Knox, Loudon, Morgan, Putnam, Rhea, Roane, Sevier, Shelby, and Smith.

The declaration request also includes a specific request for Individual Assistance for Shelby County, which, if awarded, would provide direct assistance from the federal government to Shelby County residents demonstrating eligibility.

Information about FEMA's Public Assistance program is at: <https://www.fema.gov/public-assistance-local-state-tribal-and-non-profit>.

Information on FEMA’s Individual Assistance program is at: <https://www.fema.gov/disaster/4294-4297/updates/fact-sheet-what-femas-individual-assistance-program>.

On May 31, 2017, Director Patrick Sheehan of the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) requested FEMA send federal teams to Tennessee to begin preliminary damage assessments to quantify to federal authorities the magnitude of storm damage in Tennessee.

The assessments showed damages to utilities alone in the 12 requested counties totaled \$15.9 million, with an additional \$14.6 million in local government expenditures for emergency work

related to the storms' impacts, primarily in the clean-up of debris.

"Scores of Tennesseans suffered in the aftermath of these storms, with many left with destroyed or very damaged homes," Sheehan said. "The State of Tennessee will continue working with local, non-governmental, and federal partners to ensure any qualified assistance is provided as quickly as possible."

Severe storms began moving across Tennessee on Saturday, May 27, 2017, bringing strong, straight-line winds, hail, and flooding. At the height of the severe storms in Shelby County, more than 180,000 Memphis Light, Gas, and Water customers were without power. In the storms' aftermath, city and county officials began an intense, coordinated effort to restore power, clear debris, and take care of basic human needs of residents.

As the storms moved across the state through the weekend, another 19 counties, in middle and east Tennessee, reported local power outages, downed trees and blocked roads, and damage to homes.

About the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency: TEMA's mission is to coordinate preparedness, response and recovery from man-made, natural and technological hazards in a professional and efficient manner in concert with our stakeholders. Follow TEMA on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [Twitter](#), and, at www.tnema.org.

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