

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ROY COOPER
GOVERNOR

April 25, 2018

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Through: Regional Administrator Gracia B. Szczech
FEMA Region IV
3003 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, GA 30341

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 C.F.R. § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the State of North Carolina as a result of a tornado and severe storms that impacted Guilford and Rockingham counties on April 15, 2018.

On April 15, 2018, the counties of Rockingham and Guilford were impacted by an EF2 tornado. As the tornado passed through Rockingham County there were maximum winds of 110 mph and a path width of 225 yards and a length of 17.6 miles. In Guilford County, the maximum winds were 135 mph with a tornado path width of 500 yards (1/4 mile) and length of 16 miles. The tornado caused widespread damage, including downed trees that blocked roadways, damaged residential structures and businesses, causing power outages to a significant portion of the City of Greensboro in Guilford County and at the peak left 85,000 homes and business without power in the area. The tornado generated significant amounts of vegetative debris, as well as C&D (structural) debris mostly from private residences. There was one fatality in Guilford County associated with this disaster event due to a tree falling on a motorist, as well as three others injured. In Rockingham County, there were seven event-related injuries reported.

Actions under State Law and Implementation of the State Emergency Operations Plan:

Based on the National Weather Service Storm Prediction Center's forecast on April 15, 2018, the Division of North Carolina Emergency Management (NCEM) placed the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on standby and created a WebEOC event. NCEM also took a proactive stance by reaching out to the counties in the State to warn them that weather conditions on that date were conducive to severe weather and that the agency was ready to support any needs that may result from the weather. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.36,

in response to the situation, I have taken the appropriate actions under State law. On April 20, 2018, I declared a state of emergency and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan to respond to the event as it had exceeded the capabilities of the local governments to effectively respond.

Nature and amount of State and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this incident (See Also FEMA Form 010-0-13)

NCEM activated two Logistical Operations Support Warehouses to assist with resource requests from the impacted counties. NCEM staff, including area coordinators, multi-hazard field planners, and Individual Assistance and Public Assistance staff, deployed to the affected areas to work with the local governments and volunteer agencies to assist in the coordination of response and recovery efforts. NCEM also provided commodities, such as generators and bottled water, to the affected counties. North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has also been performing debris clearance and removal operations in the affected areas. There will also be significant amounts of vegetative and C&D structural debris that will be the responsibility of the City of Greensboro to remove and dispose. Local EOCs were also activated in Guilford County, the City of Greensboro, and Rockingham County.

A. Describe Death: Addressed Above

B. Voluntary Agency Response:

There are several volunteer agencies working in the affected area to assist residents with removing debris from private property to the public right-of-way, conducting sheltering and feeding operations, tarping roofs, and assisting with other unmet needs in the community. These groups include The Baptist Men, Salvation Army, and spontaneous community groups and citizens who have been assisting with feeding and debris removal operations. The American Red Cross is assisting with shelter operations in conjunction with Guilford County staff, located in a City of Greensboro facility (Windsor Center that relocated to Glenwood Center) with a peak population of 137 occupants.

In Guilford County, the American Red Cross has served 4,389 meals and 2,462 snacks to survivors, and has so far provided 52 clean-up kits and 28 comfort kits. The Salvation Army has provided 1,300 prepared meals, 1,600 drinks, and 12 emotional and spiritual outreach contacts. The Baptist Men have reported 1,526 volunteer hours to date and the Church of Latter Day Saints has reported 104 volunteer hours assisting with debris removal. Samaritan's Purse deployed 442 volunteers and provided assistance with 43 homes to tarp roofs and debris clean up. In Rockingham County, the Baptist Men reports 1,240 volunteer hours of debris clearance, and Samaritan's Purse has assisted four households.

None of the voluntary agencies is providing home repair services to date and there is no indication that they have such a capacity.

C. State and Local Declarations:

I declared a state of emergency on April 20, 2018, that included Guilford and Rockingham counties. Guilford County declared a state of emergency on April 15, 2018, which also included the City of Greensboro. Rockingham County declared a state of emergency on April 16, 2018.

Preliminary Damage Assessment Findings

Preliminary damage assessments (PDA) for Individual Assistance (IA) were conducted on Wednesday, April 18, 2018 with Guilford County staff and NCEM. On Thursday, April 19, 2018, PDAs were conducted with Guilford County staff, NCEM, and Small Business Administration (SBA). The last round of Guilford County assessments were conducted on Friday, April 20, 2018 with Guilford County staff, NCEM and FEMA IA teams. In Rockingham County, PDAs were conducted on Saturday, April 21, 2018, with county staff, NCEM, SBA, and FEMA IA. In Guilford County, PDA results showed 36 destroyed homes/businesses, 180 homes with major damage, 289 homes with minor damage, and 316 properties affected. In Rockingham County, there were five homes/businesses destroyed, seven with major damages, 21 with minor damages, and 19 properties affected.

The tornado also caused significant damage to public and private infrastructure. The entire Guilford County school system was closed for two days due to power outages. Three elementary schools (Peeler Open, Hampton, and Erwin Montessori) will remain closed for the duration of the school year, because of the significant damage and destruction to the classroom buildings. All students from these three schools have been relocated to three other elementary schools (Alamance Elementary, Reedy Fork Elementary, and Bluford Elementary). All other schools in Guilford County are open and functional. There were no school or government closings in Rockingham County. The City of Greensboro also experienced loss of power and function to critical infrastructure and required generator power for traffic signals, city landfill, sewer lift stations, the wastewater treatment plant, and a library. The City also had damage to traffic signals, street signs, and the operations center and scale house at the landfill.

Disaster History

The State of North Carolina has a robust Individual Assistance and Public Assistance disaster recovery program. However, the State's capabilities and capacity are significantly stretched as it continues to recover from Hurricane Matthew FEMA-4285-DR that affected a significant portion of the State of North Carolina. In addition, during the last two years state, local, and tribal governments have been impacted by severe weather events, resulting in at least seven approved and one pending state and federal (U.S. Small Business Administration)

disaster declarations. The State handled response and recovery costs without federal Stafford Act assistance.

Events:

- A. The State issued a Type I disaster for Individual Assistance for a flooding event in Durham County in July 2016 for which the state was responsible for \$78,949.97 of the cost. This event also qualified for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster declaration.
- B. The State issued a Type I disaster for Individual Assistance for Bertie County for the remnants of Tropical Storm Julia in October 2016 for which the state was responsible for \$79,792.92 of the cost. This event also qualified for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster declaration.
- C. In May 2017, there was a straight-line winds and severe weather event in Sampson County, which resulted in a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and a State Type I Individual Assistance declaration for that County. The estimated cost to the state was \$650,000.
- D. On August 16, 2017, a State Type I disaster was declared for the Town of Windsor for Public Assistance for the remnants of Tropical Storm Julia in late September 2016 for which the state was responsible for \$66,704.66 of the cost.
- E. On November 15, 2017, a State Type I disaster for Public Assistance was declared for the City of Eden in Rockingham County for which the state was responsible for \$186,301 of the cost resulting from a straight-line wind event that occurred on May 5, 2017.
- F. On November 22, 2017, a State Type I disaster for Individual Assistance was declared for Watauga County, North Carolina and the contiguous counties of Ashe, Avery, Caldwell and Wilkes for severe damages as result of flooding and heavy wind for which the State is responsible for \$87,084.00 of the cost. This event also qualified for a U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) disaster declaration.
- G. A State Type I disaster was also declared for Public Assistance on April 24, 2018 for the Village of Cedar Rock in Caldwell County and the Town of Tryon in Polk County because of damages from the remnants of Tropical Storm Nate that occurred on October 8, 2017 for which the state is responsible for \$44,410.69 of the cost.
- H. In addition, there is a State Type I disaster pending for Public Assistance for Watauga County, North Carolina and the contiguous counties of Ashe, Avery, Caldwell and Wilkes for severe damages as result of flooding and heavy wind, which will have an estimated six figure impact to the state.

In addition to bearing the costs of these disasters, in fiscal year 2017, the State faced devastating effects from Hurricane Matthew, which resulted in a Stafford Act declaration requiring almost \$100 million in the State cost share (\$96,754,259.37) for both the Public Assistance and the Individual Assistance Other Needs Assistance (ONA) programs combined, to date. Our efforts to assist our most vulnerable citizens residing in flood-prone areas continue because of this catastrophic event, and it is estimated that an additional \$125 million will be required. Also in fiscal year 2017, the State suffered two significant fires that resulted in Stafford Act Fire Management Assistance Grant declarations (Party Rock and Chestnut Knob fires) which resulted in a combined state cost share of \$858,992.29.

The State may also have to bear response and recovery costs associated with infrastructure damage sustained because of the current event, as while substantial, is not likely to meet the State damage cost threshold of \$13,921,805.

Individual Assistance Request

I am specifically requesting Individual Assistance based on the results of the joint FEMA-State preliminary damage assessments show that a majority of those whose homes were destroyed or suffered major damage were without insurance. Indeed, the majority of those with minor damage are also without insurance. A number of those impacted are also of low income, and a major concern is that many residents will not qualify for loans that may be offered under a U.S. Small Business disaster declaration. According to the United States Census Bureau, the State of North Carolina currently has 15.4% of individuals living below the poverty level, and as the table below shows, the impacted counties in North Carolina are currently on average slightly over 3.5% higher than the national average for poverty and their unemployment rates are slightly higher than the national average. In addition, their median household incomes are below both the State and National Average, which creates a hardship for those individuals needing to repair and replace their property.

	Average of Persons Below Poverty Level*	Median Household Income*	Percent Elderly*	Percent Disabled*	Percent Pre-Disaster Unemployment*
National Average	14.5%	\$59,039	14.9%	19%	4.1%
State Average	15.4%	\$50,584	15.5%	16%	4.5%
Guilford County	18.3%	\$47,262	14.5%	7.3% (under 65)	4.8%
Rockingham County	18.1%	\$38,449	19.3%	12.8% (under 65)	5.2%

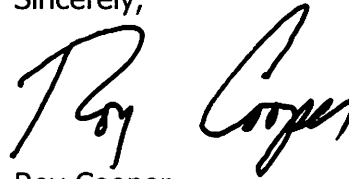
* Source: US Census Bureau

I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. The State has expended an extraordinary amount of money on Stafford Act and non-Stafford Act disasters in the past fiscal year, as well as in this current fiscal year, with serious remaining impacts yet to be addressed. Therefore, I am specifically requesting Individual Assistance, including the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), the Small Business Administration's Disaster Assistance Loans, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Legal Services, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, and the Disaster Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program for the counties of Guilford and Rockingham.

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 Mr. Michael A. Sprayberry as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,



Roy Cooper

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

A: Individual Assistance – Preliminary Damage Assessment Report