



**STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR**

**JOSH STEIN
GOVERNOR**

January 23, 2026

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. Robert Ashe, Acting Regional Administrator
FEMA Region IV
3005 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. § 206.35, I request that you declare an emergency for the State of North Carolina in anticipation of the impacts from an approaching major winter storm system.

Forecasted Conditions and Anticipated Impacts:

According to the National Weather Service, a powerful winter storm is anticipated to impact the State. A majority of the State is under an Ice Storm Warning or Winter Storm Warning from Saturday, January 24, 2026, through Monday, January 26, 2026. A Winter Weather Advisory is also in effect for eastern North Carolina from Friday evening, January 23, 2026 through Sunday morning, January 25, 2026.

Snow and sleet accumulations of up to four inches are forecast across the Northwestern Piedmont region and in the mountains. Other parts of the State may see up to two inches of snow or sleet.

Additionally, and of great concern, the State is expected to see significant ice accumulation. Areas along the escarpment near the Georgia/South Carolina line and higher elevations of the mountains in addition to the Northeastern Piedmont have the greatest chance for elevated flat ice accumulations of more than an inch. Elsewhere in the mountains and Piedmont region, widespread elevated flat ice accumulations of half to three-quarters of an inch are forecast. For areas along the southern Interstate 95 corridor and northwest of the Triad region, flat ice accumulations of between a quarter and half an inch are forecast. Lesser elevated flat ice amounts of between a tenth and a quarter of an inch are possible across inland areas of the Coastal Plains region with little to no flat ice accumulation along the coast. Dangerously cold temperatures are forecast early next week and may cause lingering impacts.

We anticipate severe disruptions to critical infrastructure, including roadways, emergency communications, and utility systems. Significant and widespread power outages are expected across the State, increasing the risk of injury or death—particularly among vulnerable populations. For example, according to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)'s *emPOWER* data, approximately 99,000 of North Carolina's 2.2 million Medicare recipients are considered medically at-risk and dependent on electricity for life-sustaining equipment. These outages, coupled with impassable roads and impaired emergency communication systems, are likely to result in heightened exposure to cold, increased traffic-related incidents, and delayed or inaccessible emergency medical services.

These impacts are expected to begin within 24 to 72 hours. Recovery and emergency operations may extend for multiple days or weeks, depending on the severity and duration of the storm.

In response to the situation, I took appropriate action under state law and declared a state of emergency for all 100 counties on January 21, 2026. The incident period for the winter weather is from the date and time of the state of emergency and is ongoing. As part of that declaration, I directed the execution of the state emergency operations plan, in accordance with Section 501(a) of the Stafford Act. The requested geographic area for this declaration is all 100 counties, the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, and the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina.

Pursuant to 44 C.F.R. § 206.35, I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary to save lives and to protect property, public health, and safety, or to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster.

I am requesting Direct Federal Assistance to support life-saving and life-sustaining operations, including but not limited to the provision and deployment of generators, emergency food and water, shelter supplies, chainsaw support teams for debris clearance, evacuation resources, both congregate and non-congregate sheltering support, emergency medical services, technical assistance, and other critical response capabilities necessary to protect public health and safety.

State and Local Response Efforts:

- I declared a state of emergency under North Carolina law on January 21, 2026 and activated the North Carolina Emergency Operations Plan.
- 11 counties have declared a state of emergency (SOE) (Alamance, Ashe, Caswell, Guilford, Montgomery, Orange, Polk, Richmond, Rutherford, Wilkes, and Yancey). I anticipate more counties will declare states of emergencies.
- Two county emergency operations centers have activated (Chatham and Orange). Several more counties are monitoring the winter storm and are prepared to open their emergency operations centers as needed.
- The North Carolina National Guard (NCNG) has activated 95 Force Packages to support statewide response, including 432 personnel and 170 vehicles. Resources will be in place no later than 1600 on 23 January and fully operational by 0800 tomorrow, 24 January.
- The North Carolina Forest Service (NCFS) has 6 task forces across the State available to support large scale clearance and debris removal operations.

- The North Carolina State Highway Patrol (NCSHP), the North Carolina Office of Emergency Medical Services (OEMS), and NCFS have deployed staff to support the Regional Coordination Centers (RCCs).
- Shelters have been opened and warming centers established across the State.
- Additional emergency protective actions are included in the State Emergency Response Team, Executive Summary # 2 dated January 23, 2026 1000 hrs.

Request for Federal Assistance:

Given the severity and magnitude of this event, I request that you declare an Emergency under Section 501(a) of the Stafford Act for the purpose of providing the following categories of federal assistance:

- Category A (Debris Clearance)
- Category B (Emergency Protective Measures) under the Public Assistance program to support emergency services, including sheltering, search and rescue, medical care, mass care, and debris removal.
- Direct Federal Assistance as necessary under 44 C.F.R. § 206.208.
- Other appropriate assistance, including coordination through FEMA and other federal agencies.

The following information is furnished on the efforts and resources of other federal agencies that have been or will be used in responding to the incident. A FEMA Liaison officer has been a part of the SERT team since the SERT team was activated.

- Deployment of generators to critical facilities such as hospitals, shelters, and water treatment plants.
- Provision of emergency food, water, and fuel supplies.
- Support for congregate and non-congregate sheltering operations, including staff and logistical support.
- Chainsaw and debris removal teams to clear blocked roads and restore emergency access.
- Evacuation support, including transportation assets for at-risk populations.
- Access to heating resources (e.g., portable heaters, warming shelters) for vulnerable populations in affected areas.
- Deployment of medical teams and mobile medical units to support overwhelmed health systems.
- Technical assistance for power restoration, communications recovery, and emergency logistics.
- Incident management assistance teams (IMAT) and federal liaison officers to support state coordination.

Disaster History:

In the last 60 months, state and local emergency management agencies have responded to Tropical Depression Chantal, Tropical Storm Helene, and the unprecedented COVID-19 global pandemic, with ten federally declared major disaster declarations to wit: Tropical Depression Chantal in September 2025, Potential Tropical Cyclone Eight in October 2024, Tropical Storm Helene in

September 2024, Tropical Storm Fred in August 2021, Tropical Storm Eta in November 2020, Hurricane Isaias in July and August 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic beginning in March 2020, severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding in February 2020, and Hurricane Dorian in September 2019. The State has declared thirteen state disaster declarations in the last two years, the most recent in July 2025. The State has responded to weather events in the for several counties impacted by Tropical Depression Chantal (July 2025), Potential Tropical Cyclone Eight (September 2024), the City of Marion (McDowell-2024), City of Newton (Catawba-2023), City of Rocky Mount (Nash-2023), Catawba County (2024), Gaston County (2024), Town of Cherryville (Gaston-2023), Town of Dertches (Nash-2023), Town of Elkin (Surry-2023), Town of Landis (Rowan-2023), Town of West Jefferson (Ashe- 2024), Village of Cedar Rock (Caldwell-2023).

I have designated William C. Ray 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.

I appreciate your support and recognition of the threat that this storm poses to the State.

Sincerely,



Josh Stein
Governor

JS:wmp

Enclosures

FEMA Form 010-0-13