



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
DENNIS DAUGAARD, GOVERNOR

July 1, 2011

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Federal Coordinating Officer
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To:
Robin Finegan
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FEMA Region VIII
Denver Federal Center
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Dear Mr. Neveau:

In 2010, the State of South Dakota experienced a record seven Presidential Disaster Declarations, with eligible public infrastructure damage totaling nearly \$100 million. As 2011 came in, we all hoped for a quieter year. Unfortunately, South Dakota has experienced an increasingly difficult year due to historic flooding conditions.

The State originally was granted a Presidential Disaster Declaration in 28 counties for public assistance due to spring flooding primarily in eastern and northeastern South Dakota. Besides public infrastructure, numerous homes, farmsteads, and farmland in northeastern South Dakota have been greatly impacted by the three years of flooding. Since the original request for a major disaster declaration was submitted, heavy rain has fallen on a record snowpack at the headwaters of the Missouri River in Montana. This precipitation has forced the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to release record amounts of water from its four mainstem dams along the Missouri River in South Dakota. As an example, the previous record release from the Oahe Dam near Pierre/Fort Pierre was 59,000 cubic feet per second (cfs) in 1997. A few weeks ago, the release from the Oahe Dam was 160,000 cfs. Communities all along the river, such as Pierre, Fort Pierre, Oacoma, Chamberlain, Yankton, Dakota Dunes, the Riv-R-Land estates development, and the Lower Brule, Crow Creek, and Yankton Sioux Tribes are being impacted by record high releases and water levels.

As a result of this record Missouri River flooding, and heavy rains exacerbating that flooding, nine counties have been added to the current Presidential Disaster Declaration for spring flooding, bringing our total declared counties to 37 out of a total 66 counties in the State. More counties continue to document ongoing flood damage, and I anticipate additional counties may also be added into the disaster for public assistance. As damage to public infrastructure continues to occur, damage to homes and businesses is also occurring and becoming increasingly worse the longer water remains in the homes and businesses. Farmsteads and vast amounts of farmland along the Missouri River are now being impacted as well. Approximately 65,000 acres have been impacted to date; 46,600 of these acres are cropland, approximately 15,000 are pasture or hayland, and the remaining 2,900 acres are homesteads, farm sites, and feedlots. At this time, producers that irrigate along the Missouri River are faced with pulling pumps due to rising water levels and flood debris. There are significant issues related to soil erosion in flooded fields. In addition to these agricultural problems, many rural residents are forced to take alternative routes to their homes and communities. A routine trip formerly following a gravel road now detours through fields and pastures because the usual route is inundated with water or completely washed out and no longer passable.

A typical flood sees water rising and then quickly receding. This year, the Missouri River in South Dakota rose in early June, and it's not receding any time soon. As I write this, the Oahe Dam is releasing 150,000 cfs of water, and is scheduled, at this time, to still be releasing 135,000 cfs on July 31. As a point of reference, the FEMA 500-year flood event equates to 82,500 cfs in the Pierre/Fort Pierre area. Today, Fort Randall's releases are at 155,000 cfs and will increase to 157,000 cfs in the coming days, staying at that level through July. Gavins Point Dam is currently releasing 160,000 cfs and releases are scheduled to stay at that level through July. No riverine flood event in any other state has lasted this long.

South Dakotans are resilient people. This year, residents have been fighting a hard fight to protect their homes and businesses from the extreme flooding. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers constructed emergency temporary levees in Pierre, Fort Pierre, and Dakota Dunes to keep floodwaters from impacting public infrastructure serving thousands of people. The flood fight has saved many homes and businesses. However, even with all these efforts from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, state and local governments, and private citizens, many homes and businesses have been impacted.

Over 400 homes were inspected during the joint preliminary damage assessment, of which 391 were uninhabitable. Eighty-three homes had major damage, one was completely destroyed, and 307 had minor damage, but are uninhabitable for an extended period of time due to the prolonged danger caused by this flooding event.

Early on, while emergency levees were still being built, voluntary evacuation orders were issued in Pierre, Fort Pierre, Riverside Acres in Yankton, and Dakota Dunes behind the temporary levees, and the safety risks of living behind these levees were explained. Many residents heeded the government warning to evacuate. In Fort Pierre, at least 185 households have evacuated. This number represents 23 % of the households in Fort Pierre. Dakota Dunes has approximately 985 households, 482 of which have evacuated – 49% of the community. Riv-R-Land

development has 56 households, 52 of which have evacuated – 92% of the development. These voluntary evacuations continue and are still in effect.

These individuals are now living in friend's basements, living in campers in a family member's driveway, renting a temporary place to live, or living in a hotel. Housing markets in these areas are tight, and there's not much extra housing. Pierre/Fort Pierre is the largest community of its size within 2.5 hours drive time. Displaced residents can't just move to the next town over. In the Dakota Dunes area, a tight housing market is forcing South Dakotans to relocate to towns that may be close by, but are in Iowa or Nebraska. Individuals will have to pay varying state taxes if they live there an extended period of time. This also leads citizens to experience longer commutes to school and work. Eventually, these citizens may decide to leave South Dakota permanently due to these factors.

The lives of these displaced residents have been significantly disrupted. Many have lost all utilities to their evacuated homes. They work during the day and then spend their nights and weekends trying to save their property from encroaching water. Some have experienced sewer back-up into their homes multiple times. They must drive through security checkpoints to reach their property. Summer recreational activities have been cancelled because the locations and facilities used for those activities are now flooded. Daycares have had to relocate as well. Those renting a temporary home now have additional rental expenses, on top of the continuing mortgage expenses on their evacuated home, not to mention the repair expenses they may have upon return. Families in motels now have additional eating expenses, since they can no longer cook a meal at home. Our voluntary agencies indicated recently that people are struggling to pay rent and other additional expenses.

The manner in which this Missouri River flood event transpired has also had a traumatic impact on the affected communities. The situation changed rapidly from a river that was noticeably high, to a full-fledged flood fight. First, the releases from the dams were set to increase to 85,000 cfs. Communities along the river made preparations for river levels at those release rates. A few days later, release rates changed to 110,000 cfs, forcing work to prepare to a new level. Then a few days later, the release rates were changed still again to 150,000 cfs, forcing citizens to regroup and prepare to an even higher level. Homeowners and business owners within the evacuation zone, responders, local leaders, and entire communities were shell-shocked and demoralized. Then, just as the communities along the river were adjusting to the 150,000 cfs releases, the releases from Oahe and Gavins Point were increased to 160,000 cfs. You can imagine the shock and dismay everyone in Pierre/Fort Pierre, Yankton County, Clay County, and Dakota Dunes/Union County felt when they learned that, for a fourth time, they had to start over with flood preparations.

Rain is also a persistent threat. Municipal storm sewers in Pierre, Fort Pierre, Chamberlain, and Dakota Dunes are blocked to prevent the Missouri River from backing up into streets, yards, and homes. Dozens of pumps are located throughout these communities to pump storm sewers after every rain. Though municipal and contracted crews work round the clock to try to keep up with pumping, rain water still floods city streets and neighborhoods. One 5-inch rain event in mid-June not only flooded streets and neighborhoods, but also brought the Bad River to a new record stage in Fort Pierre, resulting in the evacuation of an additional 100 homes in Fort Pierre, and

additional damage to homes. Another two months of high river stages, and a 90-day weather outlook calling for above-normal chances of precipitation does not give these communities much hope. The Corps of Engineers states that we are just one rainfall away from having to change flows again.

The uncertainty of this event is also taking a mental toll on many. Counseling agencies within Pierre, Ft. Pierre, and Dakota Dunes have seen an increase in clients due to flood related pressures. In the Pierre and Ft. Pierre communities, 165 flood related clients have been counseled in a one month timeframe.

Until recently, no lives had been lost, but heavy rains changed that, too. On the morning of June 21, 2011, two women, who were members of the Lower Brule Sioux Tribe, lost their lives when their vehicles fell into a large sinkhole that appeared following heavy rains in the preceding days. The Lower Brule Sioux Tribe has since declared an emergency due to flooded roads. We are currently working to add Lyman County (home to the Lower Brule Reservation) to the current Presidential Disaster Declaration.

The Crow Creek Sioux Reservation has also been feeling the effects of Missouri River flooding. The water intake for the village of Fort Thompson is just below the Big Bend Dam spillway. The record water releases from Big Bend is scouring the river channel below the spillway, causing sediment to clog filters in the tribe's water treatment plant. At one point divers were cleaning the filters every few hours. Fort Thompson is currently on water restrictions, and the state has provided bottled water to the tribe at its request.

Significant manpower and equipment available on the federal, state, county, local, and private and voluntary levels have been dedicated to responding to this flooding event. In response to this flooding event and in accordance with federal law, I have taken action under state law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan on March 11, 2011. The South Dakota Office of Emergency Management coordinated the following resources and actions to aid governments in response to the spring flooding and Missouri River flooding:

- The State pre-positioned such assets as sandbags, sand, high capacity water pumps, heavy equipment, boats, and shelter trailers to provide the most effective and efficient response in order to save lives and protect property in flood-impacted areas.
- In advance of the flood, the State requested technical assistance and advanced measures from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. From this technical assistance, the Corps identified numerous areas along the Big Sioux River which needed additional levee protection. Without this temporary levee construction and reinforcement within the City of Watertown and the Big Sioux Rural Water System, the floodwaters would have no doubt adversely affected these communities and users of the water system. Additionally, the Corps provided hesco barriers for sewer lift stations within the City of Waubay. As the flooding progressed and encompassed Missouri River communities, additional technical assistance was provided and temporary levees were constructed in Ft. Pierre, Pierre, and Dakota Dunes. Cities also took action to construct additional temporary levees to save additional public and private infrastructure. Citizens worked long hours to protect their own properties against the risk that the temporary levees would not hold or would not be constructed in time.

- Upon learning that high releases were imminent, the State immediately requested Emergency Operations Support in the form of emergency levees and other flood-fighting resources from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.
- The State Emergency Operations Center was activated to support local governments responding to the imminent flooding.
- The State worked with the National Weather Service and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to obtain daily briefings on predicted weather, release rates, and snow melt progression to ensure an appropriate state response.
- Department of Corrections inmates were utilized to assist local governments with sandbagging efforts to protect improved property. Over 7 million sandbags were issued to impacted communities.
- The Civil Air Patrol and numerous state aircraft were used on a daily basis to fly the James River, Big Sioux River, Vermillion River, and Missouri River basins to spot ice and debris jams in early weeks. The Civil Air Patrol also provided aerial reconnaissance to show emergency officials the impacts on infrastructure when the water flow releases were increased along the Missouri River. This aerial intelligence provided critical ground-truth and situational awareness to decision-makers in the state emergency operations center.
- Over 1,200 South Dakota National Guard were activated to sandbag critical infrastructure, patrol the temporary levee systems to watch for levee failure threats, provide a 24-hour Quick Reactionary Force to respond to any levee leaks or breaches, provide security for ingress/egress into evacuated areas, and to operate Blackhawk helicopters for aerial sandbag placement and aerial rescue.
- South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks conservation officers provided support for law enforcement activities to ensure criminals did not enter evacuated areas. They also provided animal control on the temporary levees to ensure the animals did not compromise the integrity of the levees. The U.S. Coast Guard teamed up with the Game, Fish and Parks for water search and rescue, and wet-side patrol of the temporary levees to ensure they remained stable and were not being compromised.
- South Dakota Highway Patrol, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol, and local law enforcement provided security to evacuated areas and provided traffic control while levees were being constructed.
- South Dakota Department of Transportation workers monitored flooded roads to ensure the safety of drivers on the road systems, assisted communities with debris clearance, and provided support for traffic control on Interstate 29 near Dakota Dunes while levee construction was ongoing.
- Swift water rescue assets were placed on stand-by in several locations.
- Two incident management assistant teams were dispatched to help local governments set response objectives, order resources, and plan for future response operations.
- Shelters were established in Pierre/Fort Pierre and Dakota Dunes.
- Water and commodities were staged to support mass sheltering.
- Pet sheltering operations were arranged to house evacuated pets.
- State GIS personnel provided mapping support to local governments.

- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, in cooperation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency monitored floodwaters for floating chemicals and disposed of them properly.
- Thousands of volunteer hours were donated to central sandbagging locations created for the public to obtain filled sandbags to protect their homes and businesses. Volunteer groups and churches delivered donated meals and water for workers fighting the flood.
- A Joint Information Center was set-up to ensure a consistent message was being delivered amongst state, federal, and local officials.

On April 13, 2011, I requested a preliminary damage assessment of public infrastructure from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency. This damage assessment revealed significant damage to public infrastructure in a 28 county area subsequently declared a major disaster due to flooding on May 13, 2011. Since that request was granted, another nine counties have been added to the declaration. This continued flooding event will likely create future additions to the declaration as local governments identify additional damage.

On June 20, 2011, I requested from FEMA a joint federal, state, and local Individual Assistance and Small Business Administration preliminary damage assessment of the impacted areas. This assessment was conducted from June 27, 2011 through July 1, 2011. The assessment confirmed severe impacts to individual homes and business in the ten counties.

As described in my letter dated May 10, 2011 requesting a major disaster declaration for Public Assistance, I have determined that this flooding event is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments, and supplemental Federal assistance is necessary.

I respectfully request you declare Individual Assistance as part of the major disaster (FEMA-DR-1984-SD) declared on May 13, 2011 under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. subsection 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR subsection 206.36. I am specifically requesting Individual Assistance programs including the individuals and households program, crisis counseling, disaster unemployment assistance, and disaster legal services. I am also requesting Small Business Administration disaster loans be made available. The following is a list of counties for which I am requesting assistance: Charles Mix, Clay, Day, Hamlin, Hand, Hughes, Kingsbury, Lyman, Stanley, Yankton, and Union.

I am also requesting the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. South Dakota has experienced much success in the past with mitigation projects. This incident presents us with another opportunity to mitigate future damages. The State is committed to mitigation projects in order to lessen the impacts of future disasters. This is evidenced by our approved standard Statewide Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, which prioritizes mitigation projects, which was approved on April 19, 2011.

South Dakota suffered seven Presidential Disaster Declarations in 2010, the largest number of major declarations ever experienced in a single state. While still recovering, South Dakota was

again granted a disaster for Public Assistance on May 13, 2011. Eight declarations in a year and three months have stretched budgets to the limit. State, county, and municipal budgets are very tight and do not have funding available to help private citizens and business owners recover from an event of this magnitude without the assistance of the federal government.

I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share required by the Stafford Act.

I have designated Kristi Turman as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. She will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency to provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Again, I sincerely appreciate your consideration of my request and your willingness to assist South Dakota's citizens in this time of record flooding.

Sincerely,



Dennis Daugaard

Enclosures