



RICK SCOTT
GOVERNOR

February 29, 2016

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Gracia Szczech, Regional Administrator
FEMA Region IV
Atlanta, GA 30341

RE: Request for Emergency Declaration
Western Panhandle Severe Storm and Tornado Events - 2016

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501 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 Florida due to the impact of the successive Western Panhandle Severe Storm and Tornado Events, beginning with the first storm on February 15, 2016, and terminating with the second storm on February 24, 2016.

The first Severe Storm and Tornado Event on February 15, 2016 brought an EF-3 tornado to northern Escambia County as well as straight-line winds as high as 80 miles per hour to portions of southern Escambia County. The second Severe Storm and Tornado Event, beginning on February 23 and ending on February 24, 2016, brought an EF-3 tornado to Escambia County and neighboring Santa Rosa County. Therefore, I respectfully request an emergency declaration for Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties.

This request is timely under the five day deadline established in 44 C.F.R. § 206.35(a) since the second storm lasted well into February 24, 2016. The need for assistance for the first storm did not become apparent until the second storm hit. Thus, a request for an emergency declaration for the first storm is timely under 44 C.F.R. § 206.35(a), as this request is submitted within five days after the need for assistance became apparent and within thirty days after the occurrence of the incident. If you

determine that an insufficient nexus links the first and second storms, then alternatively, I request an emergency declaration for each storm. At this time, I only request an emergency declaration.

A. The Weather Events

1) First Severe Storm and Tornado Event of February 15, 2016

On February 15, 2016, a severe weather system brought a tornado and strong, straight-line winds to Escambia County. According to the National Weather Service Office in Mobile, an EF-3 tornado directly impacted the rural community of Century in northern Escambia County. With estimated peak winds of 152 miles per hour, the tornado traveled 16.5 miles and had a maximum width of 300 yards. Enclosure A to this letter contains a National Weather Service image that depicts the path of the February 15, 2016 tornado.

The following damage survey from the National Weather Service describes the impacts in greater detail:

The tornado first touched down southwest of Lambert-Ridge Road southwest of McDavid. The tornado gradually increased in strength and width as it continued northeast toward Century. The first EF-2 intensity damage noted was on Holland Drive where a workshop was completely destroyed. The tornado reached its peak intensity (widespread EF-2 damage with isolated EF-3 damage) as it moved into Century. Numerous homes were damaged or destroyed. A couple of homes experienced complete loss of the roof with only the walls of small interior rooms remaining. The tornado continued to track northeast out of Century and across the Florida-Alabama state line. EF-2 intensity damage was found on Old Fannie Road east of Flomaton [Alabama]. The tornado continued northeast toward Pollard [Alabama] where it weakened and lifted. Extensive tree damage with numerous softwood and hardwood trees either uprooted or snapped. Several power poles were also snapped. Damage was also noted on the periphery of the tornado due to straight line winds produced from the rear flank downdraft.

Enclosure B to this letter contains National Weather Service photographs that depict some of the widespread damage.

At the same time that the EF-3 tornado was ravaging parts of northern Escambia County, the Pensacola metropolitan area endured straight-line winds estimated by the National Weather Service to be "as high as 80 mph...particularly in the area of 9th Avenue and Creighton Road." Of note, the area of Pensacola that endured the highest straight-line winds as a result of the February 15 storm (9th Avenue and Creighton Road) also received a direct hit from the February 23 tornado.

2) Second Severe Storm and Tornado Event Beginning February 23 and Ending February 24, 2016

During the evening hours of February 23 and well into the early morning hours of February 24, 2016, a powerful storm system brought severe weather to the Florida panhandle. In anticipation of the storm, the National Weather Service issued numerous tornado warnings and tornado watches throughout the Florida Panhandle, to include a Particularly Dangerous Situation Warning for Escambia, Santa Rosa, and Okaloosa Counties.

At approximately 8:10 p.m., Central Standard Time, on February 23, 2016, a tornado that eventually reached EF-3 strength started its destructive path across Escambia County into neighboring Santa Rosa County. With estimated peak winds of 155 miles per hour, the tornado traveled eight miles and had a maximum width of 300 yards. The following damage survey from the National Weather Service Office in Mobile describes the impacts in greater detail:

The tornado first touched down southwest of Creighton Road (Pensacola) and quickly strengthened as it moved northeast. The first area of EF-2 damage was noted on Lansing Drive where significant roof damage was observed to a couple of homes along with snapped power poles and extensive tree damage. The tornado crossed over Interstate 10 just west of 9th Avenue and crossed 9th Avenue north of the Interstate. EF-1 Damage was noted... Primarily to hardwood trees in the area of Interstate 10 and 9th Avenue. Intensification was noted as it moved further east of 9th Avenue and east of Northpointe Boulevard. The roof was blown off of two homes... One on La Borde Land and one on Gladstone Drive. Additional EF-2 damage to homes was observed in this

location. It was at this point that further intensification began. The tornado then reached peak intensity shortly thereafter as it moved over the Mooring Apartments on Old Spanish Trail and the General Electric (GE) Plant. EF-3 damage was observed at two of the apartment buildings with major damage to the 2nd story of the buildings (walls). EF-3 damage occurred at the GE plant where a warehouse was destroyed. Additional EF-3 damage was observed at the Grand Baroque Townhouses on Scenic Highway where two units were destroyed.

The tornado was near peak intensity as it moved across Escambia Bay. An 18 wheeler was overturned on the Escambia Bay Bridge just west of the Santa Rosa County line. Some of the debris from the GE plant was found near the western Santa Rosa County shoreline. The tornado weakened as it moved into Santa Rosa County. EF-1 damage was first noted on San Juan Street at Sealark Lane. The tornado continued northeast... Producing additional EF-1 damage. The tornado finally lifted near Shetland Circle just west of Avalon Boulevard.

Enclosure C to this letter contains a National Weather Service image that depicts the path of the February 23, 2016 tornado.

Initial assessments suggest that this storm caused significant damage to over 300 residences – with power outages to over 15,000 residences. Additionally, initial assessments suggest that over 100,000 cubic yards of debris needs to be collected and removed. Enclosure D to this letter contains National Weather Service photographs that depict some of the widespread damage.

B. The Situation is of Such Severity and Magnitude that Effective Response is Beyond the Capability of the State and the Affected Local Governments

1) State

As the result of an unusually strong El Niño weather pattern in the Eastern Pacific Ocean, the State of Florida has experienced, and faces an increased risk of, severe weather and heavy rainfall during the winter and spring months of 2015-16. Typically, these months constitute the dry season across many portions of Florida.

During the month of December 2015, back-to-back weather systems brought heavy rainfall to South Florida. As a result of the excessive rain and flooding that occurred in December, the U.S. Small Business Administration recently declared a disaster for Broward, Collier, Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.

The month of January, 2016 was the wettest January since record-keeping began in 1932, with up to 16 inches of rain across South Florida and up to six times the normal average in some areas. Additionally, the severe weather systems that brought heavy rainfall also spawned powerful tornados. On January 9, 2016, an EF-2 tornado struck Lee County and on January 15, 2016, an EF-2 tornado struck Sarasota County.

On February 3, 2016, I issued Executive Order 16-30, which declared a state of emergency in Broward, Collier, Glades, Hendry, Lee, Martin, and Palm Beach Counties due to the effects of the heavy rainfall. On February 18, 2016, I issued Executive Order 16-43, which extended Executive Order 16-30 for an additional 15 days.

On February 22, 2016, I issued Executive Order 16-54, which declared a state of emergency in Escambia County, Florida as a result of the first Severe Storm and Tornado Event of February 15, 2016. On February 24, 2016, I issued Executive Order 16-56, which expanded Executive Order 16-54 to include Santa Rosa County as a result of the second Severe Storm and Tornado Event beginning February 23 and ending February 24, 2016.

In addition to the foregoing, the second Severe Storm and Tornado Event also brought tornados to the southwestern Florida peninsula. According to the National Weather Service Office in Tampa, the storm spawned an EF-1 tornado in Duette, an EF-1 tornado in Port Charlotte, and an EF-0 tornado in Murdock.

Meanwhile, the water within the Lake Okeechobee basin had continued to accumulate. As a result of the increased water levels in the Lake, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers started pumping water east into the St. Lucie River estuary and west into the Caloosahatchee River estuary. In response, I issued Executive Order 16-59, which declares a state of emergency in Lee, Martin, and St. Lucie Counties.

2) Local Government

As noted above, northern Escambia County took a direct hit from an EF-3 tornado on February 15, 2016. That same day, southern Escambia County endured

straight-line winds as high as 80 miles per hour. On February 18, 2016, the Escambia County Commission declared a local state of emergency.

Still recovering from the EF-3 tornado that struck on February 15, Escambia County took another direct hit from an EF-3 tornado on February 23, 2016. Unfortunately, the path of the February 23 tornado included the area of Pensacola that endured the strongest straight-line winds on February 15.

Cumulatively, these back-to-back severe weather systems significantly impacted the ability of Escambia County to respond to the current situation. Additionally, Escambia County is still recovering from the impacts of the April 2014 storm that resulted in the major disaster declaration designated as DR-4177. As a direct result of that storm, the Escambia County jail was completely destroyed. Cumulatively, these costs directly affect the ability of Escambia County to respond to the current emergency.

C. The Situation Requires Supplementary Federal Emergency Assistance to Save Lives and to Protect Property, Public Health and Safety, or to Lessen or Avert the Threat of a Disaster

1) State

While a single tornado may not warrant an emergency declaration by the President, successive EF-3 tornadoes in the same County should – especially when those tornadoes occur within eight days of each other. Furthermore, a month of back-to-back EF-3 tornadoes (February) on the heels of a month of back-to-back EF-2 tornadoes (January) should provide additional support.

2) Local Government

Escambia County faces the daunting task of collecting and removing over 100,000 cubic yards of debris. To date, Escambia County estimates over \$4 million in debris removal operation costs.

With a local state of emergency in effect, local law enforcement agencies in Escambia County placed an approximately one square mile of Pensacola on “lockdown.” The area under lockdown suffered some of the most significant damage as a result of the February 23, EF-3 tornado. In order to protect property and maintain the peace in this area, local law enforcement agencies increased their police presence.

To date, Escambia County estimates over \$75,000.00 in emergency protective measures costs.

Without assistance, the debris removal and emergency protective measures costs will directly impact the ability of Escambia County to respond to both current and future disasters.

If this request is denied, Escambia County will suffer a reduced capability to respond to the next disaster. According to the most recent forecast models, that next disaster may come from a severe weather system that could arrive as early as Tuesday, March 1. On top of this, the month of March typically marks the peak of the tornado threat during an El Niño weather pattern.

D. Confirmation that the Governor has Taken Appropriate Action Under State Law and Directed Execution of the State Emergency Plan

In Executive Orders 16-54 and 16-56, I designated the Director of the Division of Emergency Management as the State Coordinating Officer for the duration of this emergency and directed him to execute the State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and other response, recovery, and mitigation plans necessary to cope with the emergency.

E. Information Describing the State and Local Efforts and Resources Which Have Been or Will be Used to Alleviate the Emergency

1) State

Executive Orders 16-54 and 16-56 authorize the disbursement of emergency State Housing Initiatives Partnership funding to Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties. These funds can provide emergency housing assistance, but are not available to offset the increased public safety and debris removal costs that Escambia County has borne and will bear in the near future.

2) Local Efforts and Resources

The following actions detail the local response:

- Escambia County estimates over \$4 million in Category A debris removal operation costs, and an additional \$75,000 in Category B emergency

protective measures costs as a result of the two tornadoes that impacted Escambia County within the month of February 2016.

- Escambia County deployed a mobile command post to the hardest hit area and is currently controlling access to the impacted area.
- Local Urban Search and Rescue Teams were activated after the tornado strike, with multiple missions being undertaken in the search for survivors.
- The American Red Cross opened a shelter that currently houses 27 people, and will remain open for residents who need assistance.
- The Salvation Army Headquarters currently is housing 59 people, and will remain open for residents who need assistance.
- The Alabama/West Florida Conference is assisting with volunteer coordination and volunteer hospitality.
- St. Vincent de Paul Church is coordinating donated clothing and goods to help free ESF-6 partners to focus on mass care.
- The United Way of Escambia County, an ESF-15 Support Organization, has opened a donation portal and is coordinating contributions.
- Catholic Charities has agreed to provide casework and disaster case management support in collaboration with other partners.
- A Be Ready Alliance Coordinating for Emergencies partner organization will be opening a Volunteer Team Assignment Center/Volunteer Reception Center this week.
- Northwest Florida 2-1-1 is assisting with taking calls.

F. Information Describing Other Federal Agency Efforts and Resources Which Have Been or Will be Used in Responding to this Incident

I am unaware of any Federal Agency efforts or resources currently committed to responding to this emergency.

G. Identification of the Type and Extent of Additional Federal Aid Required

As authorized by 44 C.F.R. § 206.66, I request the following forms of emergency assistance:

- Provision of health and safety measures;
- Management, control, and reduction of immediate threats to public health and safety;

- Housing assistance; and
- Debris removal.

I reserve the right to request additional forms of emergency assistance, as needed. Additionally, I understand that, absent exception, the total amount of emergency assistance may not exceed \$5,000,000.

I have designated Bryan W. Koon, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, as the State Coordinating Officer for this emergency. He is authorized to provide any further information, assurances, requests, or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

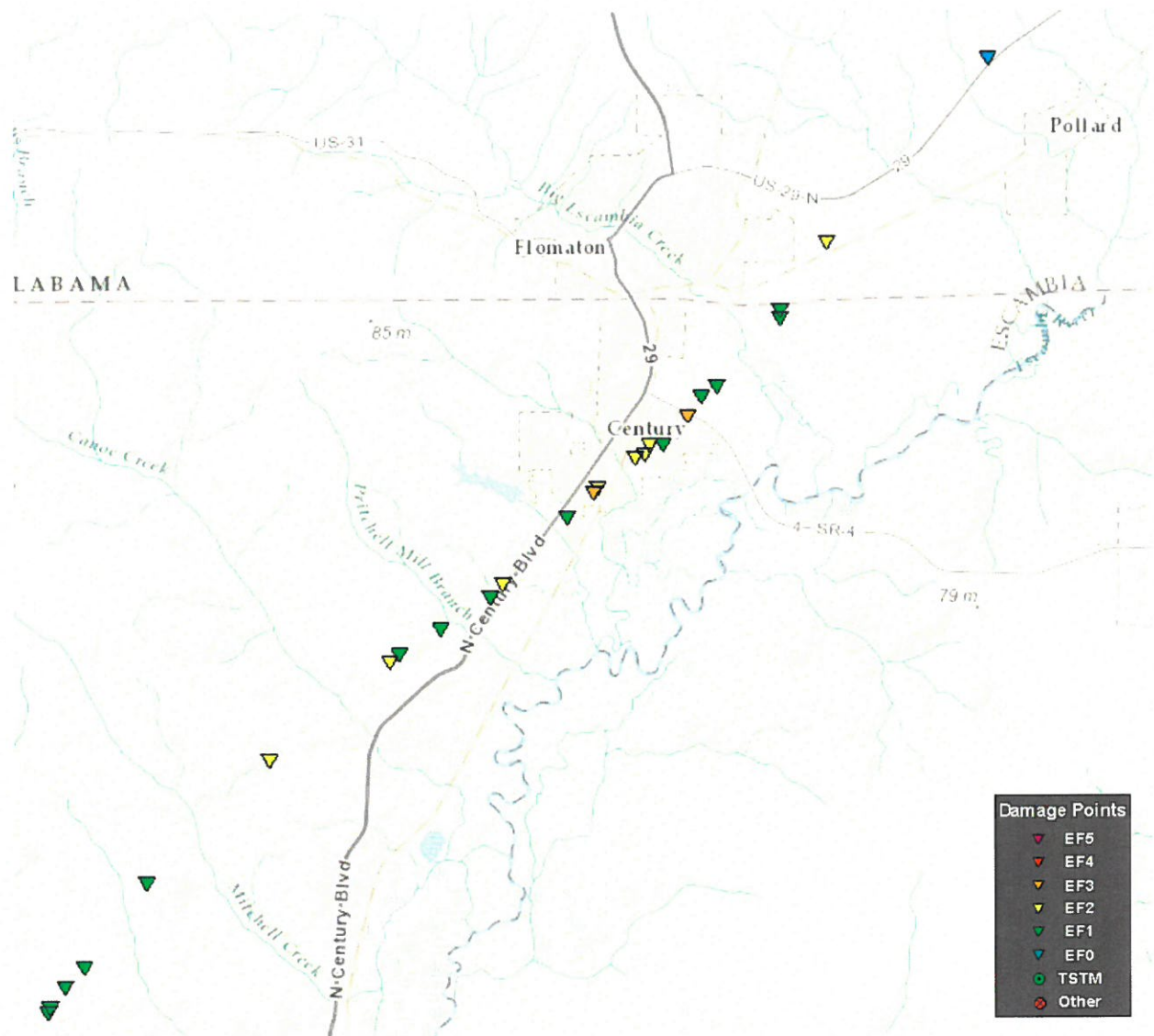
A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott", with a large, stylized initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Rick Scott
Governor

Enclosures:

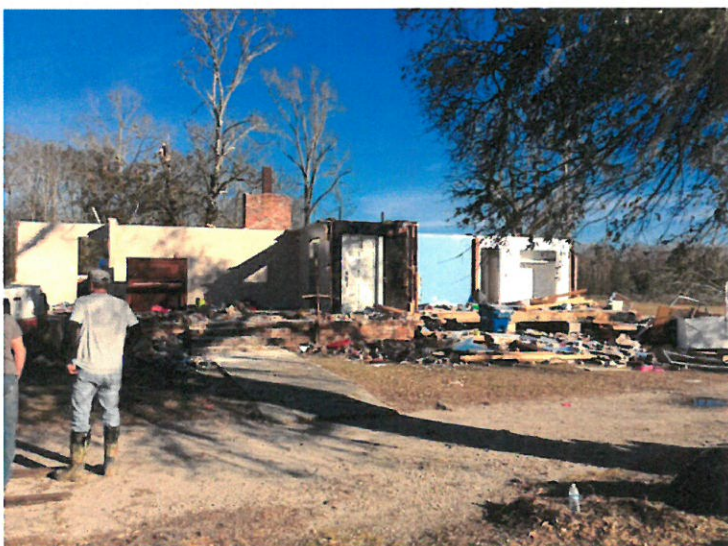
- A. National Weather Service storm track for the February 15, 2016 EF-3 tornado
- B. National Weather Service pictures for the Severe Storm and Tornado Event of February 15, 2016
- C. National Weather Service storm track for the February 23, 2016 EF-3 tornado
- D. National Weather Service pictures for the Severe Storm and Tornado Event beginning February 23 and ending February 24, 2016
- E. OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

Enclosure A
National Weather Service Storm Track for the February 15, 2016 EF-3 Tornado



Enclosure B
National Weather Service Pictures for the Severe Storm and Tornado Event of
February 15, 2016







Enclosure C

National Weather Service Storm Track for the February 23, 2016 EF-3 Tornado



Enclosure D
National Weather Service Pictures for the Severe Storm and Tornado Event
Beginning February 23 and Ending February 24, 2016











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

**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION
MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY**

1. Request Date Feb 29, 2016

Burden Disclosure Notice

Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 9 hours per response. The burden estimate includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and submitting the form. This collection of information is required to obtain a benefit. You are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding the accuracy of the burden estimate and any suggestions for reducing the burden to: Information Collections Management, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 500 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20472, Paperwork Reduction Project (1660-0009). **NOTE: Do not send your completed form to this address.**

Completion of this form including applicable attachments satisfies legal requirements for emergency and major disaster declaration requests under 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170 and 5191, respectively, as implemented at 44 C.F.R. §§ 206.35 and 206.36. Failure to use this form may result in a failure to meet these requirements and/or a delay in processing the request.

2a. Name of State (as defined in Stafford Act 102, 42 U.S.C. § 5122) or Indian tribal government requesting declaration. State of Florida	2b. Population (as reported by 2010 Census) or estimated population of Indian tribal government's damaged area(s). 18,801,310
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3. Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Name The Honorable Rick Scott, Governor	4. Designation of State or Tribal Coordinating Officer upon declaration (if available) and phone number Mr. Bryan Koon, Director, Florida Division of Emergency Management, (850) 413-9969
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5. Designation of Governor's Authorized Representative or Tribal Chief Executive Representative upon declaration (if available) and phone number
Mr. Bryan Koon, Director, Florida Division of Emergency Management, (850) 413-9969

6. Declaration Request For: ☐ Major Disaster (Stafford Act Sec. 401) ☒ Emergency (Stafford Act Sec. 501(a))

7. Incident Period: Beginning Date Feb 15, 2016 End Date Feb 24, 2016 or ☐ Continuing

If requesting a "continuing" incident period, enclose an official statement from a qualified Federal Government agency acknowledged as a national authority in a specific incident field (e.g., United States Geological Survey for seismic incidents, the National Weather Service for flooding).

7b. Type of Incident (Check all that apply)

☐ Drought ☐ Earthquake ☐ Explosion ☐ Fire ☐ Flood ☐ Hurricane ☐ Landslide ☐ Mudslide
☒ Severe Storm (rain, high water, wind-driven rain, hail, lightning) ☐ Snowstorm (Must include Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data) ☒ Straight-Line Winds
☐ Tidal Wave ☒ Tornado ☐ Tropical Depression ☐ Tropical Storm ☐ Tsunami ☐ Volcanic Eruption ☐ Winter Storm
☐ Other (please specify) _____

8. Description of damages (Short description of impacts of disaster on affected area and population). Include additional details in enclosed Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's cover letter.
On February 15, 2016, a severe weather system brought an EF-3 tornado to northern Escambia County, Florida and strong straight-line winds to southern Escambia County.
On February 23-24, 2016, a severe weather system brought an EF-3 tornado and strong straight-line winds to Escambia County and Santa Rosa County, Florida.

9. Description of the nature and amount of State and local or Indian tribal government resources which have been or will be committed. Include additional details in enclosed Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's cover letter.
In Executive Orders 16-54 and 16-56, I designated the Director of the Division of Emergency Management as the State Coordinating Officer for the duration of this emergency and directed him to execute the State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan and other response, recovery, and mitigation plans necessary to cope with the emergency.

10. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment*

☐ Individual Assistance Dates Performed _____ Requested _____ Start _____ End _____

Individual Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)

☐ Public Assistance Dates Performed _____ Requested _____ Start _____ End _____

Public Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)

11. Programs and Areas Requested

Individual Assistance ☐ N/A ☒ Individuals and Households Program ☐ Crisis Counseling Program ☐ Disaster Unemployment Assistance
☐ All ☐ Disaster Case Management ☐ Disaster Legal Services

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)) If additional space is needed, please enclose additional documentation.
Please see the cover letter.

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes in the requested counties (if applicable).

Please see **Enclosure A: Supplemental Information for Individual Assistance** for additional information in support of this request*.

**Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request*

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Public Assistance ☐ N/A ☒ Debris Removal (Category A) ☒ Emergency Protective Measures (Category B) ☐ Permanent Work (Categories C-G)*
(not available for Emergency Declaration Requests)

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)). If additional space is needed or your request includes different categories of work for different jurisdictions; please enclose additional documentation.

Please see the cover letter.

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes included in the requested counties (if applicable).

Please see **Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance** for additional information in support of this request*.

Indemnification for Debris Removal Activity

☐ I do not anticipate the need for debris removal.

I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State or Indian tribal government agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the United

☒ States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State or Indian tribal government agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

Request for Direct Federal Assistance

☐ I do not request direct Federal assistance at this time.

☒ I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property, and:

a. I request the following type(s) of assistance:

Category A Debris Removal and Category B Emergency Protective Measures.

b. List of reasons why State and local or Indian tribal government cannot perform, or contract for, required work and services.

Please see the cover letter.

c. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.208, the State or Indian tribal government agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance: (1) Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work; (2) Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work; (3) Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State or FEMA-Tribe Agreement; and (4) Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

Request for Snow Assistance

☐ N/A ☐ I request snow assistance.

Snow assistance for the following jurisdictions (Specify counties, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas).

Please see **Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data** for additional information in support of this request*.

*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Hazard Mitigation* ☐ Statewide OR

For the following specific counties, parishes, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas.

12. Mitigation Plan Information*

a. Mitigation Plan Expiration Date _____ b. Type of Plan ☐ Enhanced ☐ Standard

13. Other Federal Agency Programs

☒ I do not anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies ☐ I do anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies

Please see **Enclosure C**: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs for additional information in support of this request*.

14. Findings and Certifications

☒ I certify the following:

a. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local government or Indian tribal government and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary.

b. In response to this incident, I have taken appropriate action under State or tribal law and have directed the execution of the State or Tribal Emergency Plan on 2/22 & 2/24/16 in accordance with the Stafford Act.

c. The State and local governments, or Indian tribal government will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

15. List of Enclosures and Supporting Documentation

☒ Cover Letter ☐ Enclosure A (Individual Assistance)* ☐ Enclosure B (Public Assistance)*
☐ Enclosure C (Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs) ☐ Enclosure D (Historic and Current Snowfall Data)
☒ Additional Supporting Documentation Tornado tracks and pictures illustrating the damage



Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Signature

Feb 29, 2016

Date

If anyone except the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive signs this document, please provide the documentation that establishes that this individual has the legal authority to act on behalf of the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive.

*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request