

News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Gov. Snyder appeals federal denial of individual assistance for Upper Peninsula counties affected by severe flood damage

LANSING, Mich. – Gov. Rick Snyder today sent a letter appealing a decision made by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on August 6 that denied Individual Assistance for Houghton, Gogebic and Menominee counties following severe damage from flooding on June 16-17. A presidential disaster declaration was issued and public assistance was approved earlier this month for the three counties in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula.

Gov. Snyder sent the letter as planned upon receiving the initial denial letter. Snyder’s letter provides additional information about unmet community needs and requests a reconsideration of the decision due the severity, magnitude, and impact of the disaster and need for assistance to households and individuals. Specifically, the governor’s appeal letter states that the concentrated damages caused by this disaster are unprecedented, with Houghton County – the most heavily affected county in the disaster area – containing significantly more residences that were destroyed or sustained major damage on a per capita basis than in the 2017 mid-Michigan flooding. Additionally, the appeal cites that the disaster has caused extraordinary trauma in the community, a lack of financial resources among many residents to make necessary repairs to homes and property, decreasing voluntary agency assistance, and a lack of insurance coverage that may force residents to occupy homes that have unsafe conditions.

“While FEMA has provided the affected areas with recovery resources for public facilities, there remains a critical need for assistance to homeowners and businesses who have experienced extensive damage or property loss,” Snyder said. “Given the severity of this disaster and the sensitive financial situation facing many low-income households, I am requesting the denial of individual assistance be reconsidered.”

There is no set dollar threshold of damage that has to be met for individual assistance. The state of Michigan must demonstrate extraordinary impacts to its residents.

Individual assistance can include grants for temporary housing and uninsured home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, as well as other programs, to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the flooding.

Presidential Disaster Declaration Timeline

Gov. Rick Snyder declared a state of disaster for Houghton and Menominee counties on June 18, and added Gogebic County to the declaration on June 21, due to severe weather and widespread flooding, making available state aid and assistance to communities in the disaster area.

By declaring a "state of disaster," the State of Michigan made available all state resources in cooperation with local response and recovery efforts in the disaster area, as outlined in the Michigan Emergency Management Plan.

Based on information provided by the MSP/EMHSD, state leaders requested a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) with federal and local leaders to review and validate the most severely damaged homes, businesses and public facilities across the affected counties.

The teams conducted their assessments from June 26-29. State officials assessed the results and determined the extent of damage reached the level for receiving federal assistance.

On July 9, Lt. Gov. Calley requested that President Trump declare a major disaster as a result of the flooding damage in Houghton, Gogebic and Menominee counties.

President Trump declared a major disaster for Gogebic, Houghton and Menominee counties on Aug. 3, 2018.

Article V Section 26 of the Michigan Constitution gives authority for the lieutenant governor to act as governor when the governor is out of state.

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