



STATE OF ARKANSAS

**ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR**

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

June 6, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C.

Through: George A. Robinson, Regional Administrator
FEMA Region 6
800 North Loop 288
Denton, TX 76209

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 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Arkansas as a result of Severe Storms and Flooding that began May 21, 2019 and continuing.

In response to this event, I took appropriate action under the state law and directed the execution of the Arkansas Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan on May 23, 2019, and declared a state of emergency on May 24, 2019. The jurisdictions of Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Jefferson, Perry, Pulaski, Sebastian, and Yell Counties have all declared states of emergency. On May 28, 2019, a fatality from this event was confirmed in Sebastian County when a man was swept away in his vehicle near Barling.

The State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) activated to Level 1 (Full Activation) on Saturday, May 25, 2019, and has remained at a Level 1 daily since the initial activation, with support from all 16 Emergency Support Functions. Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM) Area Coordinators are supporting the local EOCs with technical and logistical support; ADEM Public Information Officer is supporting the local EOCs with all media relations, conducting rumor control, and providing safety

messages through press releases and social media. ADEM is hosting daily response coordination calls with all Emergency Management partners at the local, state, and federal levels; continues to partner with the USACE to conduct levee monitoring/inspections and sandbagging operations. The U.S. Department of Homeland Security - Protective Security Advisor is located in the SEOC and providing information regarding critical infrastructure threats and hazards. Arkansas National Guard is coordinating with the National Guard Bureau for satellite imagery and the 188th Wing UPAD to conduct real-time identification of risks and vulnerabilities; five high-water rescue units are pre-staged along the river for emergency evacuations. These teams are also supporting the local communities with sandbag operations. The Arkansas Wing Civil Air Patrol has also been mission assigned to provide aerial imagery and video in support of the NGAR 188th Wing UPAD mission. Arkansas is also receiving mutual aid assistance from the States of Tennessee and Missouri for an additional sandbagging machine. Arkansas Department of Transportation continues to monitor the state highways and providing logistical support to the SEOC with the movement of sandbags and other equipment. They are preparing for possible highway closures and detours as the river continues to rise. Arkansas Department of Information Systems has prepared the Arkansas Wireless Information Network (AWIN) site-on-wheels for deployment to support local communications. They have also coordinated with Verizon and AT&T for potential response. The Arkansas Forestry Commission is providing levee patrol flights along the river and providing areas of concern to the local jurisdictions. Arkansas Department of Human Services is maintaining situational awareness and coordinating any mass care needs with local jurisdictions and volunteer agencies. The state has utilized EMAC to bring in two Voluntary Agency Liaisons from Arizona and Pennsylvania to support mass care efforts. The Department of Finance and Administration is supporting procurement needs in the SEOC. They have located additional sand and procured sandbagging machines for future operations. The Arkansas Department of Health (ADH) is monitoring all infrastructure along the river to include Arkansas Nuclear One plant in coordination with the ADH Nuclear Planning and Response Office and Radiation Control. ADH engineering have been notified of ongoing waste water facility impacts in Fort Smith, AR. ADH Health Preparedness & Emergency Response (HPER) Branch, Healthcare Preparedness Program (HPP), is conducting medical coordination virtually with Regional Healthcare Coalitions, Arkansas Hospital Association (AHA), and Arkansas Health Care Association (AHCA – long term care & nursing homes). Arkansas Game and Fish Commission continues to monitor the river valley and prepared to support local jurisdictions with any swift water rescue missions. Arkansas State Police (ASP) Emergency Response Teams are monitoring the event and are capable of response if necessary. They are prepared to support local law enforcement and ARDOT with road closures and traffic control points. State Police in Troops A, E, H, and J were heavily impacted by floodwaters. The Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and Arkansas Public Services Commission continue to monitor the flooding situation with potential impacts to Hazardous Materials and Energy. Historic sandbagging efforts are currently taking place throughout the state. Volunteer, prison and county labor are currently being utilized around the clock to battle the historically unparalleled river flooding levels. Sandbagging machines are being sent from county to county, racing the rising of the river to prevent devastation from the record-breaking water levels. The state

has utilized EMAC to bring in additional sandbagging machines from Missouri and Tennessee to assist in the effort.

As a result of the historic flooding, local, state, and federal officials assisted with evacuations and Emergency Protective Measures in Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Jefferson, Perry, Pulaski, Sebastian and Yell counties. In Crawford County, multiple homes, RV, and baseball parks were evacuated in the Lee Creek area. The Sheriff's Office went door to door advising residents to evacuate. Livestock in the impacted area were also relocated. Most contents of the Field of Dreams Sports Complex in Van Buren were moved to another location to prevent damages. There was no influent coming in at Lee Creek Industrial Park, which is serviced by Van Buren Municipal Utilities. Major damage was experienced and a tank did float. Faulkner County suggested volunteer evacuations in the impacted areas. The City of Conway's airport and sanitation department had to both close. Traffic Control Points were set up at Easterwood/Highway 89, Easterwood/Redoak, Easterwood/Lollie Road, Luker Lane/Sand Gap, Faulkner Meadows and Shawbridge Road, Highway 60 at Toad Suck and Highway 25 north of Beaver Fork. There were critical infrastructure concerns at Lollie Levee, Conway Waste Water and Baptist Hospital. In Jefferson County, evacuations were mandatory for all residents surrounding the levee including Pine Bluff Regional Park Campground, Tar Camp and Rising Star Parks and Island Harbor Marina. Pine Bluff Sand and Gravel activated their Emergency Operations Plan. Several roadways in the county were either blocked or washed out due to high waters and flash flooding. Arkansas Department of Transportation provided barricades to secure flooded areas. An Army National Guard Liaison Team responded to assist in the county's Emergency Operations Center as well as additional emergency management staff from surrounding agencies who assisted with the overflow of phone calls. Perry County officials evacuated an unknown number of campers from the Toad Suck Park area. Officials went door to door advising residents in the area to voluntarily evacuate. The county received security assistance from Arkansas State Police. State Highways 300 and 9, which are major highways residents use to get in and out of the area are currently closed. The Arkansas Department of Health issued a Boil Water Notice for the areas in the Toad Suck bottoms as a precautionary measure because of the possibility that contaminated water may have entered the distribution system as a result of flood damage. The wastewater treatment plant in the city of Bigelow is completely submerged. Officials in Pulaski County evacuated several neighborhoods in the west side of the county along with areas in Scott, Oak Grove, Hensley/Woodson, Maumelle and Frazier Pike areas. Certain areas of State Highways 100, 165, 300 and other roadways have been blocked due to floodwaters during this event. Arkansas Game and Fish has a watercraft on standby for life safety issues. Arkansas National Guard along with Arkansas State Police assisted with traffic control points. Arkansas National Guard also assisted with levee monitoring. The strong floodwaters in the City of Little were strong enough to cause a boat dock to break loose and float downstream. They also had a barge to break loose. The city received technical assistance from The Army Corp of Engineers for issues at a wastewater treatment plant. In Sebastian County, an unknown number of residents were forced to evacuate due to floodwaters. The county received assistance from the Corp of Engineers with water rescues and levee inspections in impacted areas. Arkansas State Police provided security assistance. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission had high water rescue teams on standby. In Fort Smith, the Arkansas Department of Transportation briefly closed the

Interstate 540 Bridge along with U.S. 71B Midland Bridge due to the potential threat of water interfering with bridge traffic. There are 19 impacted daycare facilities, leaving 1,356 children without daycare. There are 20 schools impacted, leaving 811 children without school. The Arkansas National Guard assisted officials in Yell County with door-to-door evacuation notifications and high water rescue support. Arkansas Game and Fish Commission also assisted in rescue efforts. The City of Dardanelle reported that waters were dangerously close to overwhelming their water treatment facility. Each county received a wide range of sandbags, sandbagging machines, pumps, helicopters to drop sand bags and levee monitoring.

In Conway County, levee 16 experienced heavy seepage. The levee district crews installed 20-30 feet of sheet pile structure around the affected area but the operation failed. The Corp of Engineers staff provided technical assistance. The levee in Crawford County breached putting 6 structures at risk. Twenty super sacs were placed in the area of concern and the area is being closely monitored. Officials in Faulkner County are continuing to monitor the status of Lollie Levee. Lipsmeyer Levee in Perry County overtopped causing 121 structures to be at risk. Sebastian County requested coordination from the Corp of Engineers from levee inspections. At this time, there have been no known breaches. The levee in Yell County overtopped and breached on May 30th and has since caused a significant impact on the City of Dardanelle. There are currently 121 structures at risk.

Back flow from the Arkansas River into Palarm Creek continues to flood into Lake Conway in Faulkner County. The lake is over three feet above normal pool level and continues to rise. Over four feet of water is flowing backward over the lake's dam. The water level is rising one foot every 24 hours. This puts close to 100 homes around Lake Conway at risk of catastrophic flooding.

Throughout the course of this event, the American Red Cross managed shelters in Faulkner County at Conway Sports Center, Sebastian County at Evangelical Temple Assembly of God and in Yell County at Dardanelle Community Center, as well as Seabrook YMCA in Jefferson County and the North Little Rock Community Center. They also collaborated with a shelter in Crawford County at Dyer Community Building. The count for these shelters is currently 138. American Red Cross is also utilizing local donations or Salvation Army to support feeding shelter clients. Arkansas Baptist Relief deployed a shower, laundry and feeding unit to Fort Smith to assist the displaced. They communicated with chainsaw and flood recovery units in anticipation of those items being needed along the Arkansas River in the coming weeks. They also sent a feeding team to Conway to feed inmates assisting in sandbag operations and set up a remote incident management team to organize and coordinate supplies.

Once it was determined that the extent of damages was found to be beyond the capacity of local jurisdictions, ADEM requested Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) from FEMA for Sebastian, Crawford, Perry, Conway, Faulkner, Yell, Pulaski, and Jefferson Counties, respectively. Because most, if not all areas were inaccessible due to flooded roadways, aerial PDAs were conducted. We anticipate that the number of homes damaged will increase due to the inability to view all areas by air. As the Arkansas River

has not yet crested in areas downstream, it will be necessary to conduct additional aerial PDAs as practicable in future impacted areas such as Arkansas and Desha Counties.

In Jefferson County alone, 124 homes were destroyed, with 116 sustaining major damage. In all, over 857 homes sustained major damage or were destroyed across eight counties, with several counties yet to experience the full impact of the floodwaters. Out of the 1,147 homes assessed thus far, an estimated 97.25% are uninsured, with 78.3% of those homes owner occupied versus rented. It is further estimated that 20.58% of those individuals are low income creating an additional hardship for individuals striving to repair their property.

These counties are in dire need of assistance in order to help individuals regain suitable living conditions that cannot be obtained at their current financial status. The average unemployment rate for the eight counties affected under IA is 3.2%. Because several of the hardest hit areas also experienced major damage to infrastructure, industry, trade, and local businesses, as well as agricultural enterprises, it is expected that applications for disaster related unemployment will be high.

Percentage of the population:	<i>for whom poverty status is determined</i>	<i>already receiving governmental assistance</i>	<i>Pre-disaster unemployment rate</i>	<i>65 years and older</i>	<i>18 years and younger</i>	<i>with a disability</i>	<i>who speak a language other than English</i>
Data Source*	US Census Bureau	USDA	US Bureau of Labor Statistics	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau	US Census Bureau
National Average	12.3%	21.3%	3.6%	15.6%	22.6%	8.7%	21.3%
State Average	16.4%	17.5%	3.6%	16.6%	23.5%	12.5%	7.7%
Requested Jurisdictions							
Sebastian	22.5%	16.3%	2.6%	15.5%	24.2%	14.9%	15.3%
Crawford	16.6%	14.9%	2.7%	16.2%	24.7%	14.6%	6.6%
Perry	17.8%	14.1%	3.6%	19.7%	22.2%	15.5%	2.0%
Conway	18.5%	17.7%	3.9%	19.5%	22.6%	16.0%	3.1%
Faulkner	16.3%	11.2%	2.4%	12.1%	23.3%	10.3%	5.3%
Yell	18.8%	13.1%	3.1%	17.5%	24.8%	14.8%	17.8%
Pulaski	15%	12.7%	2.8%	15%	23.4%	11.3%	7.8%
Jefferson	23.5%	21%	4.5%	16.8%	22.3%	13.3%	3.5%

While infrastructure is crucial to economic growth, citizens also play a vital role in the need for recovery efforts. According to the United States Census Bureau, Arkansas currently has 16.4% of individuals below the poverty level, making the state the seventh in the nation among impoverished states. While this may not appear to be a large number,

the average number of individuals living below the poverty level within the counties affected is 18.6%, with Jefferson County representing the largest amount of 23.5%. However, each affected county struggles with poverty.

Severe poverty is a major component in economic depression, leading to the need for assistance. The median income for Arkansans is \$43,813, but the majority of homes affected represent individuals below the poverty level, which creates a hardship for individuals needing to repair or replace their property. A large percentage of elderly and uninsured individuals reside in these communities.

The individuals that reside in the eight counties are seeking to remain in their communities but asking for assistance to repair their property. Based on preliminary damage assessments conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), an estimated cost of \$27,198,644 is needed to cover the cost of temporary housing, repair and replacement housing, as well as provide for other needs required by citizens of these communities. Through the Individual and Household Program (IHP), FEMA has estimated housing assistance for 1,133 individuals with 810 individuals requiring Other Needs Assistance (ONA) such as clothing, household appliances, vehicle repairs and additional items needed to help regain some normalcy. As with any county, the infrastructure, as well as the citizens of these disaster areas is equally important in the recovery and sustainability of a community.

The State of Arkansas sustained an estimated \$8,582,910.73 in Categories A and B. The State of Arkansas sustained an estimated \$1,359,600.00 in Category A, making up 15.84% of the total estimated cost; an estimated \$7,223,310.73 in Category B, making up 84.16% of the total estimated cost. Preliminary damage estimates show a huge impact to local jurisdictions with damages as high as \$28.41 per resident in Conway County, \$24.95 per resident in Sebastian County, and \$18.15 per resident in Perry County. Due to the inaccessibility of several areas, Public Assistance PDAs will be completed as the water recedes. The state anticipates a request for additional categories of work once damage assessment data is collected. Due to having several power and utility plants under water, public buildings and facilities submerged, roads and bridges compromised, parks and recreational facilities affected, and countless unknown damages we anticipate the additional infrastructure request to be of great magnitude.

Since January 2017, there have been four gubernatorial declarations and one federally declared disaster. Infrastructure damages from these events are estimated at \$37,806,676.40 and are expected to severely deplete the Governor's Disaster Fund. In addition to the federal and state disasters declared since January 2017, Arkansas continues to recover from 20 presidentially declared disasters since 2008. The impact on our citizens continues to be severe and during the last two federal disasters that included IA, 4,433 individuals were assisted at a total of \$5,174,892.98. Many of the same counties in Arkansas are continually inundated with severe weather, which has put a burden on not only the local jurisdictions but also the state's ability to effectively continue to respond to, and recover from, such events. Without the assistance of a Major Disaster Declaration, it would be difficult for Arkansas to bare all of the responsibilities and properly recover

from this event and the Governor's Disaster Fund continues to defray both program and administrative costs for all open state and federal disasters.

In conclusion, I have determined that these storms and flooding are 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. Arkansas is experiencing and expecting significant and widespread impacts on and near the Arkansas River and additional rainfall this week will prolong major flooding and will add additional pressure to river levees.

I am specifically requesting: Individual Assistance for the counties of Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Jefferson, Perry, Pulaski, Sebastian and Yell. Public Assistance Category A—Debris Removal, Category B—Emergency Protective Measures, and Direct Federal Assistance for the counties of Conway, Crawford, Faulkner, Jefferson, Perry, Pulaski, Sebastian and Yell. Public Assistance and Category B—Emergency Protective Measures limited to Direct Federal Assistance is requested for the counties of Arkansas, Chicot, Desha, Franklin, Johnson, Lincoln, Logan, and Pope. Your favorable consideration for this declaration is appreciated.

Sincerely,



Asa Hutchinson
Governor

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
A: Individual Assistance
B: Public Assistance
Governor's Executive Order
National Weather Service Weather Summary