

GOVERNOR PATRICK REQUESTS MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION OVER COSTLY APRIL NOR'EASTER

Asks President Bush to help communities damaged by storm

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BOSTON – Governor Deval Patrick has made a request to President Bush to declare a Major Disaster Declaration for Public Assistance in order to expedite financial aid to the local cities and towns of Essex, Plymouth, Barnstable, Dukes, Franklin, Hampden, Hampshire and Berkshire Counties impacted by the Nor'easter, beginning on April 15, 2007. Governor Patrick also requested assistance from the Small Business Administration for Essex County.

“I want to thank the Executive Office of Public Safety and the Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency for their help during the storm and their diligence in the days following the storm,” said State Representative Michael A. Costello. “I know many people worked hard assessing the damage to get us to this point. Hopefully, this disaster declaration will bring much needed relief to homeowners and businesses affected by the severe flooding that my district experienced.”

“I am very pleased that the governor has requested federal disaster relief money to help our district,” said Senator Steven A. Baddour. “We have all been working hard to make him aware of the magnitude of the damage done. The most important outcome is getting much needed relief to those affected, and this is an important step in that process. I know that I, along with my colleagues, will continue to do everything I can to produce positive results for those in need as a result of the storm.”

Following the storm, a Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment was conducted by Federal Emergency Management Agency and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency teams to determine the extent of infrastructure damage caused by both coastal and inland flooding in the most impacted counties. They have examined dams, bridges, public roadways, and public facilities.

Preliminary damage estimates exceed \$10 million with the most severe damage to public roadways, bridges, seawalls and revetments.

“This storm has brought much financial hardship to those communities who are still recovering from the last declared flood events of May 2006 and October 2005,” Governor Patrick wrote. “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 governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary.”

If successful, the Public Assistance Program would reimburse communities located within the eight counties with a 75 percent federal share of the costs for the repair, restoration and/or reconstruction of public facilities and infrastructure, as well as flood-related overtime costs for first responders.

“I want to thank Governor Patrick for his leadership in responding to the storm,” Costello said. “I look forward to continuing to work with the Governor, MassHighway and other state agencies to address infrastructure damaged as a result of the severe weather we experience during the week of Patriot’s Day.”

Due to the excellent mitigation steps taken following the floods of 2005 and 2006, the amount of damage suffered by individual homeowners and businesses was far less than in previous storms. To help some of the residents and businesses rebuild, Governor Patrick also has requested that the Small Business Administration (SBA) declare Essex County a disaster area for Physical and Economic Injury. SBA loans would provide an important source of financing for uninsured or under-insured commercial and residential members of the community.

A survey of local families and businesses, conducted by MEMA estimated that the damage exceeds the SBA's criteria of at least 25 primary residences and/or businesses with uninsured losses of 40 percent or more of their estimated replacement value in a qualifying county.

If approved by the SBA, long term, low interest infrastructure loans of up to \$200,000 could be granted to credit-worthy homeowners and \$1.5 million for business owners, helping them to bridge gaps that may exist in their insurance coverage. Similar loans for personal property are capped at \$40,000.