



STATE OF GEORGIA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
ATLANTA 30334-0900

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

March 17, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Through: Major Phillip May
Regional Administrator
FEMA Region IV
3003 Chamblee Tucker Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare an expedited major disaster for Fulton County in the State of Georgia as a result of the devastating impacts resulting from tornadoes and severe weather events beginning March 14, 2008, and continuing through the early morning hours of March 16. The National Weather Service (NWS) has confirmed an EF-2 tornado with the strongest winds reaching 135 mph touched down in the downtown area of the City of Atlanta on Friday, March 14 at 9:45 p.m. The tornado was 200 yards wide at its widest and left a path of damage six miles long.

The State of Georgia and Fulton County were subject to a series of severe weather systems and super cells that raked the state for thirty-six hours. The National Weather Service issued 48 Tornado Warnings with fourteen confirmed tornado reports. While this request for an expedited major disaster is submitted for Fulton County where the storms first struck and the resulting damage is best known, the State intends to submit requests for additional county declarations as preliminary damage assessments become known. Twenty-nine counties are reporting storm damage (see attached map).

Damages to Public Buildings

Significant damage occurred to the numerous state and local facilities in Fulton County including the following: Georgia Dome, Georgia World Congress Center, Grady Memorial Hospital, 2 Peachtree Street State Office Building, King Memorial Center, Sam Nunn Federal Building, numerous buildings on the Georgia State University campus, and three local schools,

including Bethune Elementary School, Herndon Elementary School and Kennedy Middle School. Public parks and cemeteries damaged include: Historic Oakland Cemetery, Centennial Olympic Park, Hurt Plaza Park, Butler Park and Woodruff Park.

The public high rises damaged or impacted by the storms that subsequently created street debris include: CNN Center, Omni Hotel, Atlanta Chamber of Commerce Building, Georgia Pacific, Equitable Building, 101 Marietta Street and the Ritz Carlton Hotel.

Damages to Residential Facilities

Initial Individual Assistance Damage Assessments conducted with local, state and FEMA representatives on Saturday and Sunday (March 15-16, 2008) reported 769 residential structures impacted.

| | Affected | Inaccessible | Minor | Major | Destroyed | Total |
|--------------|----------|--------------|-------|-------|-----------|-------|
| Rental Units | 109 | 156 | 88 | 133 | 16 | 502 |
| S F Units | 125 | 28 | 38 | 49 | 27 | 267 |
| Total Units | 234 | 184 | 126 | 182 | 43 | 769 |

The most visible damage was reported at the Cotton Mill Lofts, where two floors of a five story residential building collapsed. Much of the damage occurred in the Cabbagetown area just east of downtown. This is an area that is characterized by lower income and working income households including numerous elderly renters. Numerous public safety officials, several Georgia Search and Rescue Teams, and debris removal crews are at these locations responding to the communities' needs for immediate assistance. Two shelters were opened to assist with needs of the disaster victims. The shelter is operated by the American Red Cross. Over 45 individuals used the facility in the past two days. The American Red Cross is considering two locations for potential service center sites in Vine City to assist families in that impacted neighborhood. The American Red Cross has indicated that 122 volunteers and staff have reported serving 250 meals three times per day in the disaster impact area.

Another public housing development, the Antonie Graves Tower, with seventy (70) elderly residents was evacuated and residents relocated by the American Red Cross. Residents have now been offered accommodations at an extended night stay facility.

Personal Injuries and Fatalities

Tragically, two individuals have died from injuries sustained from the storms in Polk and Floyd Counties in North Georgia. These are two counties that GEMA expects to be submitting a subsequent request for declaration designation. In Atlanta, twenty (20) individuals were transported to local emergency rooms for assistance. Grady Memorial Hospital reported an overall increase in the number of emergency room visits Friday and Saturday. The Atlanta 911 Center received a marked increase number of calls from individuals seeking assistance on Friday

and Saturday during the storms seeking information of protective measures, safety issues and available shelters.

Public Services and Utilities

Fourteen (14) roads in downtown Atlanta have been closed since Friday night as well as entrance and exit ramps to Interstate 75/85. The King Memorial MARTA Transit station was closed for a brief period to inspect damages to the station. Additional local law enforcement officers have maintained public order in the downtown area, supplemented by a contingency of Georgia State Patrol Officers and the Rockdale County Mobile Command Vehicle. Mayor Shirley Franklin has continued to request that individuals not come downtown if at all possible to aid public safety officials with the recovery efforts.

Power was disrupted to 384,241 Georgia Power households from Friday through Sunday nights. Full power is expected to be restored in the next few days.

Emergency Protective Services and Debris Removal

Through Sunday, debris removed from the downtown area is continuing and the beginning costs for the building and construction debris removal from the public roads started at \$5 million. Clean-up of the commercial, hotel and retail district is expected to continue for several weeks.

Emergency Protective Services costs incurred from Friday, March 14, 2008 through Sunday, March 16, 2008 has been reported at \$1.4 million and continuing.

Official Governor Actions and Certifications

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on March 15, 2008 in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. I have declared a State of Emergency on March 15, 2008 for the City of Atlanta-Fulton County.

The State of Georgia has a federally approved standard state mitigation plan. The State is in the process of updating their mitigation plan on or before April 15, 2008. The updated plan has been reviewed by FEMA and determined to be approvable pending adoption.

A Preliminary Damage Assessment by the state is underway and a joint Preliminary Damage Assessment has been requested to Federal Emergency Management Agency on March 15, 2008. 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.

This request is for 100% direct federal assistance, debris removal and emergency protective measures, Category A & B for the first 72 hours. In addition, I am requesting Public Assistance for categories A, B, and E, Individual Assistance, including the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, and Small Business Administration disaster loans for Fulton County. I am also requesting the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for the entire State of Georgia.

The following information is furnished on the nature and amount of State and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster:

- The State Operation Center has been activated and is coordinating the provision of state resources.
- The Department of Transportation has provided traffic control assistance and road clearance operations and continues to conduct damage assessments of roads and bridges.
- Georgia Building Authority is participating in the preliminary damage assessments with GEMA and FEMA.
- The American Red Cross has opened two shelters in Fulton County. There are currently more than 100 people utilizing these shelters.
- The North Georgia Search and Rescue Task Force, which includes six Georgia Search and Rescue Type 3 Teams, in support of Atlanta Fire Department, have been deployed for search and rescue efforts for collapsed structures in the City of Atlanta and Fulton County. They have completed search and rescue efforts in more than 200 buildings in downtown Atlanta.
- The Department of Agriculture is conducting inspections of food products in damaged grocery facilities.
- Georgia Power has brought in a number of teams from around the State to restore power to the disaster area.
- Georgia State Patrol has provided for helicopter support for aerial survey. GSP has assisted local law enforcement with traffic control and ambulance support and the evacuation of the sporting venues.

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

In accordance with 44 CFR § 206.208, the State of Georgia 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 Agreement; and
4. Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

In addition, 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 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 agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

I have designated Charley English as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. He will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessment and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonny Perdue". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sonny Perdue