State of Louisiana
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
P.O. BOX 94004
BATON ROUGE
70804-9004

Jeff Landry
Governor

REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL MAJOR DISASTER DECLARATION
COVER LETTER

February 4, 2026

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

Through: Arsany Thomas
Acting Regional Director
FEMA Region VI
800 North Loop
Denton, TX 76209

SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5170 (Stafford Act), as implemented at 44 C.F.R § 206.36, I request that you declare an expedited major disaster for the State of Louisiana effective January 23, 2026, as a result of the recent Winter Storm. A system of heavy rains, wintry precipitation, and dangerously cold temperatures began moving across Louisiana on January 23, 2026. That storm brought significant amounts of ice and sub-freezing temperatures that lasted for several days. The impacts of the Winter Storm pose a serious threat to the lives and property of the people of Louisiana.

In response to this situation, I took the appropriate action under state law and declared a statewide emergency (JML 26-006) on January 22, 2026. I directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in support of the statewide emergency declaration in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. Furthermore, I temporarily suspended certain state restrictions in order to allow flexibility in providing emergency protective measures. A copy of those declaration are attached. A total of 44 parishes also issued parish emergency declarations and executed their own emergency operations plans.

On January 23, 2026, I requested a Presidential Emergency Declaration in order to obtain Direct Federal Assistance and Public Assistance, Category B, to assist the state in providing immediate support to survivors of this storm. Louisiana is appreciative that the Emergency Declaration was granted the following day, and was designated as FEMA-3638-EM. After the storms left the state, and we were able to begin assessing the impacts from extended record-breaking freezing temperatures, precipitation, and debris, I have determined that additional federal assistance is needed and I am requesting an expedited approval for debris due to the magnitude of the debris operations and the necessity to provide funding to start work in the most impacted areas. This will allow GOHSEP to gain access and then prioritize on additional preliminary damage assessments with our local and FEMA partners.

I am requesting all categories of Public Assistance, A-G, including Direct Federal Assistance, for the following parishes:

Bienville, De Soto, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll.

Due to the devastating impacts in these parishes, which includes widespread ice accumulations and debris, I am requesting snow assistance and an increased federal cost share of 100% for 30 days. I am also requesting Hazard Mitigation Assistance for the listed parishes to fund projects that will increase their resilience from future winter weather threats.

DISASTER IMPACTS

The Winter Storm brought icy precipitation and extremely cold temperatures throughout most of the state. Louisiana's northern parishes experienced the most severe impacts. Most of those parishes experienced widespread power and water outages. Several hospitals and nursing facilities were operating on generator power. The outages were exacerbated by the extended icing of roads in the north. The I-20 corridor was almost impassable for several days, causing approximately one hundred drivers to abandon their vehicles. These conditions greatly hampered response efforts, as deliveries of necessary resources were delayed due to the state's inability to access all of the impacted areas.

Tragically, these dangerous conditions caused nine deaths. The Louisiana Department of Health has confirmed that seven of those deaths were related to hypothermia. There was an additional death related to an individual's oxygen concentrator that failed during a power outage, and one fatality motor vehicle incident on the icy roads.

The Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) reported peak power outages of more than 175,000 Louisiana residents without power. State and local entities worked continuously to restore power to these individuals, but it took several days to restore power to the majority of those residences, businesses, and public facilities. In many cases, these homes lacked the ability to provide heat for several days while the temperatures outside remained well below freezing. At one point, four hospitals, four nursing homes, and nine intermediate care facilities relied solely on generator power.

The Louisiana Department of Health ("LDH") reports that, at one point, 32,487 customers were totally without water. 187,359 other residents were on Boil Water Advisories ("BWAs"). The continued freezing temperatures slowed efforts to resolve the outages. As of LDH's latest report on February 2, there were still five weather-related water outages and 63 BWAs for a total population of almost 27,000 Louisiana residents.

As previously mentioned, many roadways throughout the northern section of the state were closed due to icy conditions. Some motorists were stranded on the dangerous roadways, requiring state and local assets to take emergency measures to ensure the safety of those individuals. An additional threat occurred after temperatures finally rose. Daytime thaws in the northern part of the state led to overnight re-freezing of the water, resulting in numerous patches of dangerous black ice.

Due to the dangerous Winter Storm conditions, all state offices were closed on January 26, 2026. State offices remained closed in the hardest-hit parishes through February 2, 2026. Likewise, all schools were closed on January 26, 2026. While schools in the southern parishes were able to quickly reopen, most schools in the northernmost parishes remained closed for the entire week, with some remaining closed through February 2, 2026. The dangerous conditions that shut down those government offices also brought businesses to a standstill. The U.S. Small Business Administration recently approved Economic Injury Disaster Loans for 19 parishes in north Louisiana as a result of those shutdowns.

Shattered trees, trapped people, a prison break: Inside a Louisiana parish's week of icy chaos



*East Carroll Parish Headline- https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/jailbreak-power-outage-icy-chaos/article_d06bffca-66e3-4b2f-810d-169e976113c7.html

STATE RESPONSE

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

GOHSEP activated its EOC to Level 3 on January 23, 2026, and is still coordinating response measures across the state, including but not limited to delivering bottled water and MREs to areas without reliable power and water, and delivering of generators to critical facilities.

LDH is tracking water outages and boil advisories around the state, and coordinating response measures. Of particular concern are any water outages or boil advisories affecting critical medical facilities.

The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) tracked dangerous road conditions and deiced roads when possible. Numerous bridges and overpasses throughout the state were closed for days due to icing. DOTD continues to assess the impacts of the winter storm. As the threat of ice has passed, DOTD is now evaluating debris on state highways and will soon begin debris removal operations.

Louisiana State Police ("LSP") has coordinated with other state agencies such as DOTD in order to provide assets to help keep roads open or divert traffic from dangerous roads. Overall, the LSP responded statewide to 169 crashes and over 480 motorist assists in the icy conditions.

Total costs incurred by State agencies up to this point are $11,394,460.61. This amount exceeds the threshold established by FEMA for determining that a disaster is beyond the State's capacity, and it does not yet include the costs of debris removal. It is fully expected that when final costs are identified from parish and local municipalities, it will further support that this event had significant financial impacts.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Of the 64 parishes, 44 issued emergency declarations. Parishes and municipalities have dealt with the same conditions on their local roads as State agencies have on State highways. Local governments have also expended significant funding and efforts related to providing necessary items and services for survivors without heat or water.

With the widespread and prolonged power and water outages around the state, local governments have explored numerous options for providing safe locations in which residents could shelter. A number of parishes and municipalities have opened warming centers for individuals without power or heat. Several others partnered with local volunteer organizations to provide warming centers.

Based upon initial estimates from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers ("USACE"), the parishes in this request have more than one million cubic yards of debris that they will need to remove. That number will continue to rise as USACE continues its inspections. Most of these parishes are inexperienced with debris operations, and have not established prepositioned contracts. GOHSEP is assisting these parishes with guidance on federal procurement compliance as they procure debris monitors and removal contractors. The costs associated with that debris removal alone is expected to exceed the state's Public Assistance threshold.

Summary

I have determined that this winter storm is of such severity and magnitude that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of the state and local governments and that supplemental federal assistance is necessary. Therefore, I am requesting a Presidential Major Disaster Declaration to provide Public Assistance, Categories A-G, including Direct Federal Assistance, for the parishes of ***Bienville***, ***De Soto, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll***. Due to the devastating impacts in these parishes, which includes widespread ice accumulations and debris, I am requesting snow assistance and an increased federal cost share of 100% for 30 days. I am also requesting Hazard Mitigation Assistance for the listed parishes to fund projects that will increase their resilience from future winter weather threats.

I urge you to provide an expedited declaration in order to provide immediate federal relief to these highly impacted communities. I anticipate that once we have the opportunity to fully assess damages around the state, a number of additional parishes will need federal assistance to allow them to recover from this disaster. I hereby certify that state and local government obligations and expenditures for the current disaster will comply with all applicable cost sharing requirements of the Stafford Act.

I have designated Brigadier General Jason Mahfouz as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) and Neal Fudge as the Alternate GAR. I have designated Sandra Gaspard as the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) for this request. These designees will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will provide further information and justification on my behalf.

For Louisiana,



Jeff Landry
Governor

Enclosures:
OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13
State Emergency Declarations (JML 26-006, JML 26-009)

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY
Federal Emergency Management Agency

REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY

OMB Control Number 1660-0009
Expires 06/30/2026

1. Request Date February 4, 2026

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.	2b. Population (as reported by 2020 Census) or estimated population of Indian tribal government's damaged area(s).
Louisiana	4,657,757

3. Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Name	4. Designation of State or Tribal Coordinating Officer upon declaration (if available) and phone number
Jeff Landry	Sandra Gaspard 985-969-0410

5. Designation of Governor's Authorized Representative or Tribal Chief Executive Representative upon declaration (if available) and phone number
Jason Mahfouz 504-655-6622

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

7. Incident Period: Beginning Date January 23, 202 End Date January 27, 202 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.

The Winter Storm brought icy precipitation and extremely cold temperatures throughout most of the state. Louisiana's northern parishes experienced the most severe impacts. Most of those parishes experienced widespread power and water outages. Several hospitals and nursing facilities were operating on generator power. The outages were exacerbated by the extended icing of roads in the north. The I-20 corridor was almost impassable for several days, causing approximately one hundred drivers to abandon their vehicles. These conditions greatly hampered response efforts, as deliveries of necessary resources were delayed due to the state's inability to access all of the impacted areas.

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.

As of this date, Louisiana is tracking more than $11,000,000 in state costs associated with the Emergency Protective Measures (EPM) conducted by state agencies in response to this event. That amount does not include debris removal from state highways and damage repairs.

Local parishes are still gathering data to submit on their costs associated with EPM and damages. USACE has so far estimated more than 1,000,000 cubic yards of debris that local parishes will have to remove, with an estimated cost of more than $25,000,000.

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** February 4, 2026 **Start** _____ **End** _____

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

GOHSEP is requesting FEMA assistance in conducting PA PDAs in the parishes of Bienville, De Soto, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll.

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 ☐ Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance

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).

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.

The State of Louisiana is requesting emergency protective measures to be authorized in the parishes of Bienville, De Soto, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll.

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:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) support for debris removal efforts.

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

USACE provides specific expertise in this field that state and local governments do not possess.

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).

Bienville, De Soto, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll

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.

Bienville, De Soto, East Carroll, Franklin, Morehouse, Ouachita, Richland, Tensas, and West Carroll

12. Mitigation Plan Information*

a. Mitigation Plan Expiration Date March 29, 2029 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 January 23, 2026 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 Executive Orders JML 26-006, JML 26-009

Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Signature

Feb 4, 2026
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*