

Gov. Evers: Requests federal disaster aid for July's severe storms

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MADISON — Gov. Tony Evers today has requested a federal disaster declaration for 18 Wisconsin counties and two tribes for damage sustained from severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding in July. The request would provide federal disaster assistance to help local governments and electric cooperatives recover some of their costs from responding to the storms, protecting citizens, removing debris, and repairing roads and other infrastructure.

“Damage assessments by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and Wisconsin Emergency Management (WEM) verified more than \$19.5 million in eligible damages,” said Gov. Evers. “We need federal disaster assistance to help these Wisconsin communities recover from the widespread damage and debris removal caused by the devastating July 18-20 storms.”

Gov. Evers sent a letter to President Donald Trump requesting the federal disaster declaration for Barron, Clark, Forest, La Crosse, Langlade, Marinette, Menominee, Monroe, Oconto, Oneida, Outagamie, Polk, Portage, Rusk, Shawano, Vernon, Waupaca, and Wood counties and for the Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin and St. Croix Chippewa Indians of Wisconsin.

“Approval of this declaration will go a long way to help those communities recover from the loss suffered during the devastating storm,” said Dr. Darrell L. Williams, WEM Administrator.

A series of severe storms moved across parts of western and northern Wisconsin beginning late on July 18 and continuing through July 20. The first round brought

over five inches of rain causing flash flooding in the Vernon and La Crosse county areas. Storms Friday and Saturday resulted in strong winds with speeds up to 100 mph in portions of northern Wisconsin, downing hundreds of thousands of trees and numerous power lines. In addition, the storms spun up 17 tornadoes. Another line of storms moved through central Wisconsin on Saturday causing significant damage to the Fox Cities area.

Two people were killed during cleanup following the storms. Emergency rooms across the impacted areas also reported several cases of individuals sustaining injuries as a result of moving downed trees and other debris. In addition, more than 300,000 customers were without power for days.

Throughout the last month, several state, local, tribal and volunteer agencies helped with the cleanup. The Wisconsin National Guard assisted with debris removal in Barron, Polk, and Langlade counties from July 22 to August 11. In addition, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and the Wisconsin Department of Corrections also provided resources to help remove downed trees and debris.

If approved, FEMA's Public Assistance Program would help communities recover some of the eligible costs incurred including emergency protective measures, infrastructure repair and debris cleanup from the storms. FEMA provides 75% of eligible costs. The state of Wisconsin and local communities impacted share the remaining 25%.

The program is not for businesses or homeowners as the level of damage in these areas, unfortunately, does not currently meet requirements for federal disaster relief. Residents and businesses that may have impacted should check municipal, county and tribal government or emergency management websites and social media pages for information on possible resources that may be available.

A copy of the letter is available [here](#).