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Gov. Evers: Requests presidential disaster declaration in response to COVID-19 pandemic

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MADISON – Gov. Tony Evers today sent a letter to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) requesting that the president issue a major disaster declaration for the entire state of Wisconsin, as a result the COVID-19 pandemic. The request covers all 72 counties and the state's federally recognized tribes.

"The response to this virus has required a tremendous response from the state and all of its communities that far exceeds the resources currently available to us," Gov. Evers said. "By seeking this declaration, we are hopeful the state will be able to access critical programs that are needed to deal with the pandemic now, and with the recovery that will be taking place down the road."

Having determined that Wisconsin met all of the criteria required to receive a major disaster declaration, Gov. Evers in his letter requested that the federal government provide the following programs to support the state's response: Public Assistance, Direct Assistance, Hazard Mitigation (statewide), and certain Individual Assistance programs; Crisis Counseling, Community Disaster Loans and the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Program.

"The response to this outbreak has caused multiple deaths, exhausted many of our resources, resulted in record unemployment claims, and taken a toll on the community infrastructure that is in place to protect the public," Gov. Evers said. "We need federal assistance to help rebuild those critical safety nets and ensure they remain strong."

"As we deal with this horrific pandemic, this declaration will assist with acquiring

the needed resources for the people of Wisconsin," said, Dr. Darrell L. Williams, Wisconsin Emergency Management administrator.

Gov. Evers declared a public health emergency on March 12 in response to the outbreak, which directed the Department of Health Services to take all necessary and appropriate actions to help combat the spread of the virus. On March 14, the governor directed Wisconsin Emergency Management to activate the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) to provide additional coordination in support of the state's response.

A copy of the governor's letter is available here.