



JOHN R. KASICH  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF OHIO

March 7, 2012

The Honorable Barack Obama  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C. 20500

Through: Mr. Andrew Velasquez, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region V  
536 S. Clark Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60605

Dear Mr. President:

When we talked by phone on Saturday you asked that I keep you apprised of the situation here in Ohio in the wake of last Friday's storms, and so I am now writing to request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Ohio as a result of tornadoes, severe storms and high winds beginning and ending March 2, 2012. I make this request under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5208 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36. Federal disaster assistance is being requested for Clermont County.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Plan on Friday March 2, 2012, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act which continues to be in effect.

Under my authority as Governor, a State declaration was issued on Saturday March 3, for Clermont County. On March 5, I requested a joint Federal, State, and local survey of the damaged areas. Preliminary assessments indicate the most severe impacts are to the private sector and are described in detail below (see Impact).

The current State Hazard Mitigation Plan is a Standard Plan and is effective as of May 13, 2011. An Enhanced Mitigation Plan was submitted to FEMA Region V on February 24, 2012, for consideration.

I have determined this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting the

Individuals and Households Program (IHP), Housing Assistance and Other Needs Assistance (ONA), Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, Small Business Administration Home, Personal Property, Business and Economic Injury Loan Program and Disaster Legal Services for Clermont County and appropriate USDA assistance programs and the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program for all counties within the state.

	Average of Persons Below Poverty Level	Median Household Income	Percent Elderly	Percent Disabled
National Average	13.8%	\$51,914	13.0%	%
State Average	14.2%	\$47,358	14.1%	%
Clermont County	9.3%	\$58,472	11.8%	%

*\*Percent disabled was unavailable*

Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in Enclosure A. Estimated requirements for assistance from certain Federal agencies under other statutory authorities are tabulated in Enclosure B.

**IMPACT**

On Friday, March 2, 2012, severe storms entered the state of Ohio in the late afternoon and early evening hours. Clermont County suffered three fatalities: one in the Village of Moscow—a village councilwoman, and two in the Village of Bethel. Five people were transported to the area hospital. The National Weather Service confirmed that seven tornados impacted southern Ohio, an EF3 in the Village of Moscow, Clermont County, EF0s in the Village of Otway and Village of Rarden in Scioto County, an EF2 and EF0 around the Village of West Union in Adams County, an EF1 in the Village of Seaman, Adams County and an EF0 around the Village of Piketon, Pike County. This tornado outbreak caused damage to single family homes, mobile homes, businesses and state and local government facilities and resulted in significant construction and woody debris.

An EF3 tornado hit the Village of Moscow where over eighty percent of the homes were impacted, a third of them destroyed or uninhabitable. This level of damage brings with it a significant housing issue. The Village is within site of the Zimmer Power Plant. This plant is undergoing significant improvements and those contract employees hired to work at the plant have taken all available rental properties in and around the Village. The State of Ohio has activated its State Disaster Housing Strategy and

subsequently has been in contact with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development to seek assistance with housing units. However, none of their programs can be utilized by the forty-seven displaced families without a federal disaster declaration. Even if these programs were available, there is very limited housing within a 30 mile radius of the Village. Financial assistance through insurance coverage (estimated at forty-two percent), the American Red Cross, the State Department of Development and long term recovery committees may be available, but actual properties for rent are not. A FEMA Individual Assistance declaration would open resources for the disaster survivors that state and local resources simply cannot provide.

The Village of Moscow is a historic river town, population 244, situated on the north bank of the Ohio River. One of the structures that sustained significant damage is Fee Villa, a building listed on the National Register of Historic places; Fee Villa is a well-known and documented stop on the Underground Railroad. The Village is comprised of 100 housing units, a small village hall and a U.S. Post Office. Approximately fifty percent of the housing units are destroyed or have major damage. The Village Community Center sustained damage and community leaders are currently operating from a trailer set up outside the damaged facility. The Village Community Center had been designated as the emergency relief center for the Village and surrounding areas in local emergency management plans, and now that option no longer exists for residents. The Post Office also sustained damage during the event. This is a rural, middle class village with a median housing value of \$80,000. Many residents are retirees and are on fixed incomes.

The major employer for the Village is the Zimmer Power Plant. This facility is within walking distance of the Village (0.2 miles). It too, sits on the Ohio River directly north of the Village. Those residents employed by the plant and dislocated from their homes are having to travel twenty plus miles to their place of employment and those with school age children are having similar commutes. Transportation is particularly difficult for dislocated residents who also lost their vehicles in the tornado. Many vehicles were destroyed or rendered inoperable by the tornado, making commuting a great distance impractical.

The Village is located almost entirely in the 100-year flood hazard area of the Ohio River. The community participates in the National Flood Insurance Program and actively enforces local flood hazard area development regulations. As of December 31, 2011 there were forty-seven active flood insurance policies in force for \$4,923,700 in coverage. There are a significant number of homes in the Village of Moscow that are substantially damaged and must comply with current flood hazard area development regulations. Depending on the location in Moscow, residents that decide to rebuild must elevate structures one or more stories. Since the damage to these structures was

caused by wind, and not flooding, Increased Cost of Compliance coverage that is part of most flood insurance policies is not available to Moscow residents. Some residents and businesses may decide not to rebuild in the community, which would impact the local tax base. There will be a need for assistance to help Moscow and other affected communities incorporate mitigation into the repair and recovery process.

In the past year, the State of Ohio has received one major disaster declaration related to flooding in April/May 2011. This declaration was for twenty one counties in southern Ohio, including Clermont County. The state is providing half of the non-federal share for the Public Assistance Program, estimated at \$5.3 million. The state is also providing a match to the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program under this declaration, estimated at \$814,000. In addition, the State of Ohio implemented the State Individual Assistance Program following flash floods in May 2011 in several southern Ohio counties. This Program provided grants totaling \$708,000. Finally, following this event, the Governor has made available funding through the State Disaster Relief Program which will reimburse the local governments for their debris removal and emergency response efforts. This Program is estimated at \$250,000.

In summary, while the level of damage sustained in this disaster may fall below the levels sustained by Kentucky and Indiana, the significant shortage of housing alternatives creates a unique need that cannot be solved without supplemental Federal assistance. This need is, in fact, so acute that I ask you to approve Ohio's request as quickly as possible in order for impacted families to begin receiving Federal aid as quickly as possible.

If an answer to my request cannot be made by Monday, March 12, or on the same timeframe as requests from other states impacted by this storm, out of a desire to see impacted families begin receiving essential assistance as quickly as possible, I will withdraw this request and, instead, seek other Federal assistance, such as that available from the Small Business Administration, for which I believe Ohio already qualifies. Though less significant, assistance from SBA programs would be able to be provided relatively quickly.

Hopefully your response to my request will be positive. If not, however, I hope that you and your Administration will still consider the concern I raised to U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano by phone on Saturday and again on Tuesday that every effort needed to be made—outside of the lines of existing Federal programs if necessary—to find alternative, innovative ways to meet Clermont County's severe housing crisis. There is always a way to solve a problem if we put our heads together and are willing to think outside the box.

To clarify, the lack of available housing will be exacerbated by the fact that most rental properties within a reasonable distance of the Village of Moscow would remain unavailable without the programs offered by HUD and the USDA. The mitigation needs

of the Village can only be supplemented with the immediate benefits of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program. The financial assistance provided through the Individual Assistance Programs will support the approximately fifty eight percent of disaster survivors who are uninsured or under-insured and the elderly populations on a fixed income.

## **STATE ASSISTANCE AND RESPONSE EFFORTS**

**ESF 1 – Transportation:** Immediately following the tornado outbreak, District Offices of the Ohio Department of Transportation began clearing debris from the federal and state routes within the affected areas. This work was widespread not only in the counties affected by the tornados but also areas further east in counties were experiencing flash flooding. In addition to re-opening roads, the Ohio Department of Transportation garage in West Union suffered damage to a metal building, a salt barn and several vehicles and dump trucks. State financial resources will be impacted by these damaged state facilities.

**ESF 2 – Communications:** The MARCS radio tower in Moscow was on generator power from the time of the tornado until March 6.

**ESF 3 – Engineering and Public Works:** On Sunday, March 4, the State of Ohio activated the Debris Working Group which immediately began coordinating state assets available for clearing debris from the right of way, inspection and approval of a temporary staging area located in the Village of Moscow and coordinating with the U.S. and State Departments of Agriculture regarding a quarantine in Tate Township, Clermont County, due to the Asian Long Horn Beetle. The Ohio Department of Transportation and the Ohio National Guard are currently supplementing local assets in the Village of Moscow and Franklin Township in the removal of construction and woody debris to the local staging area. ESF 3 is currently working or has closed five missions related to debris removal and the temporary staging area.

Further complicating the debris removal operation is the pre-event quarantine and compliance requirements for the Asian Long Horn Beetle in Tate Township. Any woody debris currently located within the quarantine perimeter has to be picked up by contractors who have been trained by the Department of Agriculture and homeowners are being instructed on the proper disposal at a USDA holding site.

The State of Ohio also monitored activities at the Moscow Sewage Treatment Plant and Tate-Monroe Water plant that operated during the height of the power outage on generator power.

**ESF 4 – Firefighting:** One EF0 tornado impacted the Village of Otway in Scioto County causing damage to the roof of a community center and collapsing a building that housed the Village Fire Department equipment. One piece of equipment was totally destroyed. Insurance coverage will provide \$50,000 but a replacement engine will cost

\$250,000. The Fire Department has been referred to a fire department in Auglaize County that may be able to donate the equipment and the State Fire Marshalls Office is coordinating efforts with the County and Village on possible state financial assistance. The Village of Otway is a small village of approximately 80 people with only a \$70,000 annual budget. It is located in the northwestern part of Scioto County in a very isolated, rural area.

**ESF 5 – Emergency Management:** The state Emergency Operations Center activated on the evening of Friday, March 2. The EOC remains at Crisis Action System Level I. One Ohio EMA Field Liaison remains deployed to Clermont County to assist with local EMA efforts. Clermont County declared on Friday night at 7:25 and the Clermont County EOC activated 5:30 pm on March 2 and remains activated.

**ESF 6 – Mass Care:** Several ESF 6 agencies continue to operate in the affected area. The American Red Cross (ARC) opened a shelter in the Village of New Richmond on March 2. This shelter closed on March 5 but on March 7, the Cincinnati Red Cross stated they may re-open this shelter due to the significant level of displaced households that cannot find long-term housing. In addition, on March 3 the ARC set up a Family Assistance Center and deployed several response vehicles to the area. To date, the ARC has served 1237 meals and 2542 snacks and has provided 215 clean up kits and 122 comfort kits. Mobile feeding and bulk distribution continues. A Donations Management Center and Volunteer Reception Center opened at the Clermont County Fairgrounds on March 3 and it remains open.

In addition to the ARC and voluntary agencies, long term recovery committees will be an integral part of the recovery for Clermont County. Following the 1997 Ohio River flood, Clermont County and surrounding areas set up a long term recovery committee. This committee was never disbanded and has been re-activated for this event. One of this committee's goals will certainly be the housing issues but again, their assistance will be limited by the lack of housing in the affected area.

**ESF 9 – Search and Rescue:** The Hamilton County Urban Search and Rescue team deployed to Clermont County immediately following the tornado outbreak to assist local fire and EMS personnel conduct a door to door search and rescue in the village of Moscow.

**ESF 12 – Utilities:** There was a peak of 10,000 outages in the affected area but all power has been restored to those facilities capable of power restoration. The Village of Moscow was under a voluntary evacuation the night of the tornados so that inspections for gas leaks could be performed. The Fire Department went street by street to ensure that all residents were aware of the situation. Many subsequently self-evacuated; however, many residents chose to remain at home. Residents who had evacuated the area were allowed to re-enter at 4:00 p.m., March 3.

**ESF 13 – Law Enforcement:** The Ohio State Highway Patrol assisted local law enforcement in the Village of Moscow with security operations, including guarding the Post Office that was damaged and controlling access to the area. A curfew remains in place in the Village.

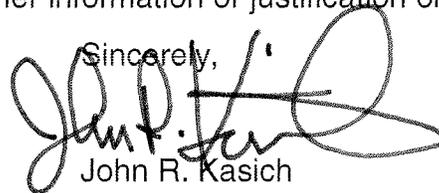
**Additional State Support**

The Attorney General Consumer Protection Section has set up a contractor registration program in the Village of Moscow and is providing other general consumer protection information.

The Ohio Department of Jobs and Family Services has made available Temporary Assistance to Needy Families grants to eligible families, elderly Ohioans and those with disabilities meeting income thresholds. These funds can be used for immediate, essential relief until other forms of assistance are available.

I certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume the applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total expenditures are expected to exceed \$24,260 in accordance with Enclosure C.

I have designated Nancy J. Dragani as the State Coordinating Officer for this request. She will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and may provide further information or justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,  
  
John R. Kasich

Governor

Enclosure

**ENCLOSURE A TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST**

**Estimated Requirements for Individual Assistance under the Stafford Act**

County	Assistance to Individuals and Households				Other Programs	
	Temporary Housing  <i>(Indicate No.)</i>	Repairs	Replacement	Permanent Housing Construction	Other Needs Assistance	(Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Legal Services, and Crisis Counseling)
Clermont	\$ 18,208	\$ 525,930	\$ 337,447		\$ 97,040	
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>\$ 18,208</b>	<b>\$ 525,930</b>	<b>\$ 337,447</b>		<b>\$ 97,040</b>	

**ENCLOSURE B TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST**  
**Estimated Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs**

<b>County</b>	<b>SBA Home Loans</b>	<b>SBA Business Loans</b>	<b>FSA Loans</b>	<b>NRCS</b>	<b>FHWA</b>	<b>USACE</b>	<b>OTHER</b>
<b>Totals</b>							

*Note: TBD*

**ENCLOSURE C TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST**

**Governor's Certification**

I certify that for this current disaster, State and local government expenditures and obligations will include the non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. As stated in my basic letter, and based on information available at this time, tabulation of these estimated expenditures and obligations are as follows:

<b>CATEGORY OF ASSISTANCE</b>	<b>AMOUNT OF NON FEDERAL SHARE</b>
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Individual Assistance:

Other Needs Assistance under the IHP	\$ 24,260.00
Other (Specify)	\$ 0.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b><u>\$ 24,260.00</u></b>

**Grand Total:** **\$ 24,260.00** \*

\*In addition to match for the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program