

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR



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**REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL EMERGENCY DECLARATION
COVER LETTER**

February 17, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D. C.

Through: George A. Robinson
Regional Director
FEMA Region VI
800 North Loop
Denton, TX 76209

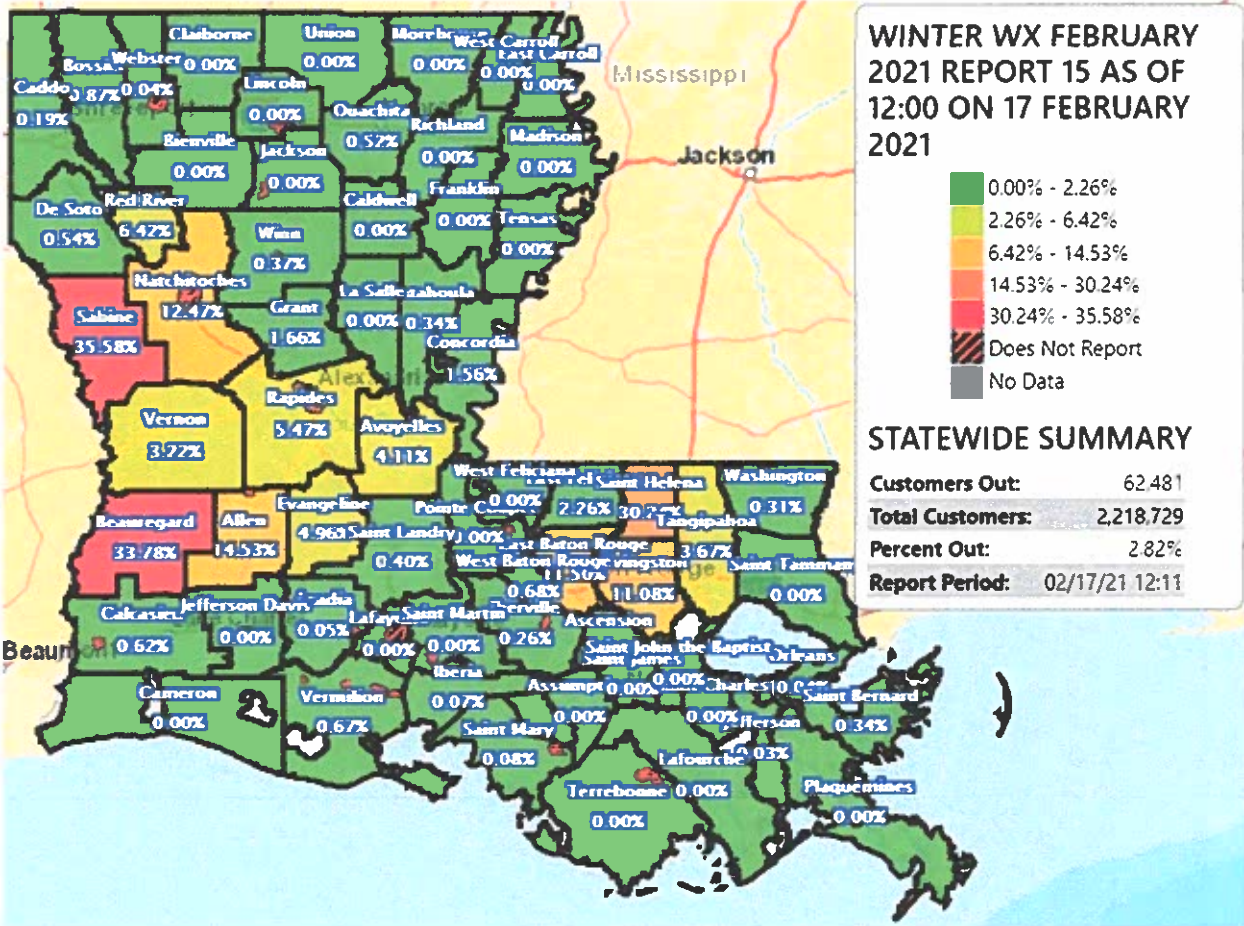
SENT VIA EMAIL

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501(a) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.35, I request that you declare an emergency for the State of Louisiana effective February 11, 2021, as a result of the recent severe winter weather event. A system of heavy rains and wintry precipitation began moving across Louisiana on February 11, 2021, and a second, similar system, followed on February 17, 2021. The impacts of the wintry precipitation and low temperatures pose a serious threat to the lives and property of the people of Louisiana.

The National Weather Service (NWS) reports that the initial weather system brought snow, sleet, freezing rain, and record low temperatures to most of the state. These conditions caused numerous power and water outages, as well as dangerous road conditions that inhibited local government efforts to respond to individual emergencies. After the initial system moved out of the state on February 15th, Louisiana experienced record low temperatures across the state, causing dangerous icy conditions and extensive damages. A second winter storm passed through the state on February 17th. The additional snow, sleet, freezing rain and low temperatures exacerbated the icy conditions and caused additional utility outages and dangerous road conditions. These conditions continue as of this moment.

On the morning of February 16, 2021, the Louisiana Public Service Commission (LPSC) reported more than 200,000 Louisiana residents were without power. State and local entities have worked continuously to restore power to these individuals, but the map below shows that, as of today, 62,000 homes are still without power. In many cases, these homes will lack the ability to provide heat for several days while the temperatures outside remain below freezing.



Additionally, the Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) reports that as of the morning of February 17, 2021, there are 36 water outages throughout 18 parishes and 178 Boil Water Advisories throughout 39 parishes. These numbers represent a population of 48,584 without water and 956,833 under a Boil Water Advisory. The continuing freezing temperatures slow efforts to resolve these outages. In addition, because of frozen or damaged water mains and distribution systems, several hospitals in the State are without ready access to water, which is affecting both the availability of water for use and the operation of boilers to provide heat. Currently seven (7) hospitals and six (6) nursing homes are on generator power. Tragically, LDH has also reported three (3) deaths attributable to the inclement weather.

In response to this situation, I have taken the appropriate action under state law and declared a statewide emergency (20 JBE 2021) on February 11, 2021. Furthermore, I have directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in support of the statewide emergency declaration in accordance with Section 501 of the Stafford Act. A copy of that declaration is

attached, as well as a copy of 21 JBE 2021, in which I provided additional guidance for emergency response. As of the time of this request, 47 parishes have issued parish emergency declarations.

I anticipate the need for emergency protective measures, including mass care and sheltering for those individuals without power and heat during the current crisis. Throughout this event there has been a need for sheltering which may increase with the weather event the State is currently experiencing. The State has 127 individuals in 60 hotel rooms in Calcasieu Parish (which was dramatically affected by Hurricanes Laura and Delta last year), 4 individuals in a shelter in Morehouse Parish, and a Warming Shelter with 1 homeless individual in Tangipahoa Parish. Additionally, both state and local governments are utilizing all available avenues to provide vital resources to medical and emergency services such as potable water and bulk water for fire protection services. These resources will likely increase as the State is able to de-ice roads and transport supplies to all areas where there is a need.

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:

STATE

- GOHSEP activated its EOC to Level 3 on February 11, 2021, and is coordinating response measures across the state, including but not limited to:
 - Delivery of bottled water to essential facilities without potable water;
 - delivery of water tanks for fire protection services without water; and
 - transportation of essential staff to facilities.
- LDH is tracking water outages and boil advisories around the state and coordinating response measures.
- LPSC is tracking power outages around the state and coordinating response measures.
- The Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD) is tracking dangerous road conditions and de-icing roads throughout the state. Numerous bridges and overpasses throughout the State remain closed due to icing.
- Louisiana State Police reports 350 motorist assists and 127 crashes on state highways. Local police forces are addressing similar problems on local roads.

PARISHES

- 47 parishes have currently issued emergency declarations.
- Five (5) to seven (7) parishes are currently conducting either congregate or non-congregate sheltering for survivors who are currently without power and heat. Due to the winter weather forecast to continue through the end of this week, these efforts are continuing and may be expanded in some areas based on extended power outages and water system outages.

In addition to the state and local efforts listed above, Louisiana is still working to recover from three hurricanes in the last six months that were declared major disasters. The State is still sheltering a significant number of survivors from those storms. All of these recovery efforts have occurred during the current COVID-19 pandemic, which has added additional difficulties to any recovery efforts. For these reasons, and pursuant to 44 CFR Section 206.35, I have determined that

this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and affected local governments, and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary to save lives and to protect property, public health and safety, and to lessen or avert the threat of a disaster.

I am specifically requesting:

Public Assistance Category B (Emergency Protective Measures)

Public Assistance Category B, emergency protective measures, including those associated with mass care evacuation and shelter support, is requested statewide.

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

Direct Federal Assistance (DFA)

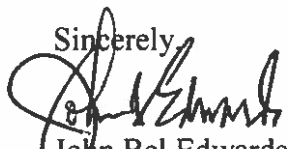
I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property, to include:

- Ambulance and other medical services
- Commodities due to extended power and water outages

In accordance with 44 CFR Section 206.208, the State of Louisiana agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance:

1. Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-way 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.

I have designated James B. Waskom as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR) and Casey Tingle as the Alternate GAR. I have designated Casey Tingle as the State Coordinating Officer (SCO) for this request. Director Waskom and Mr. Tingle will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and will provide further information and justification on my behalf.

Sincerely,

John Bel Edwards
Governor

Enclosures

OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

State Emergency Declaration (20 JBE 2021)

Amendment to State Emergency Declaration (21 JBE 2021)