

Preliminary Damage Assessment Report

West Virginia – Severe Storms, Flooding, Landslides, and Mudslides Denial of Appeal

Denied on April 12, 2023

On October 14, 2022, Governor Jim Justice requested a major disaster declaration due to severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides during the period of July 12 to August 15, 2022. The Governor requested Individual Assistance for two counties, Public Assistance for seven counties, and Hazard Mitigation statewide. During the period of August 26 to October 11, 2022, joint federal, and local government Preliminary Damage Assessments (PDAs) were conducted in the requested areas and are summarized below. PDAs estimate damages immediately after an event and are considered, along with several other factors, in determining whether a disaster is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments, and that Federal assistance is necessary.¹

Based on information from the National Weather Service (NWS), it was determined that four separate and distinct storm events occurred during the requested incident period (July 12-13, 2022; July 25-28, 2022; August 10-11, 2022; and August 14-15, 2022). Each storm event was evaluated separately to determine whether they independently meet statutory and regulatory requirements for a declaration. On November 28, 2022, the State of West Virginia received a major disaster declaration (FEMA-4678-DR) for Public Assistance in McDowell County and Hazard Mitigation statewide during the period of July 12-13, 2022. In addition, the state received a major disaster declaration (FEMA-4679-DR) for Public Assistance in Fayette County and Hazard Mitigation statewide occurring August 14-15, 2022. On December 1, 2022, the Governor's request for Individual Assistance for two counties and Public Assistance for Kanawha County under FEMA-4679-DR was denied. On December 5, 2022, the Governor's request for Public Assistance in four counties occurring July 25-8, 2022, and Public Assistance in two counties occurring August 10-11, 2022, was denied.

On January 27, 2023, Governor Justice appealed these determinations and requested that his initial request for a major disaster as a single event be re-evaluated.

On April 12, 2023, the Governor's appeal to consider the storm events that occurred during the period of July 12 to August 15, 2022 as a single event was denied based on the determination that four separate and distinct storm events occurred during the requested incident period. The information confirmed flash flooding occurred in the impacted areas rather than a prolonged flooding event.²

Summary of Damage Assessment Information Used in Determining Whether to Declare a Major Disaster

Individual Assistance

- Total Number of Residences Impacted:³ 149
 - Destroyed - 1
 - Major Damage - 31
 - Minor Damage - 89
 - Affected - 29

- Percentage of insured residences:⁴ 20.0% Flood
- Percentage of poverty households:⁵ 19.3%
- Percentage of ownership households:⁶ 90.0%
- Population receiving other government assistance such as SSI and SNAP: 7.4% SSI
17.9% SNAP
- Pre-Disaster Unemployment: 6.5%
- Age 65 and older: 20.8%
- Age 18 and under: 20.3%
- Disability: 22.1%
- IHP Cost to Capacity (ICC) Ratio: 12
- Total Individual Assistance cost estimate: \$1,070,691

Public Assistance

July 12-13, 2022

- Primary Impact: Damage to roads and bridges
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$3,270,515
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$1.82
- Countywide per capita impact: McDowell County (\$128.49).

July 25-28, 2022

- Primary Impact: Damage to roads and bridges
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$1,110,474
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$0.62
- Countywide per capita impact: Fayette County (\$16.28), McDowell County (\$5.22), Mingo County (\$9.28), and Wyoming County (\$6.22).

August 10-11, 2022

- Primary Impact: Damage to buildings and equipment
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$517,473
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$0.29
- Countywide per capita impact: Doddridge County (\$13.86) and Jackson County (\$14.73).

August 14-15, 2022

- Primary Impact: Damage to utilities
- Total Public Assistance cost estimate: \$3,961,465
- Statewide per capita impact:⁷ \$2.21
- Statewide per capita impact indicator:⁸ \$1.77
- Countywide per capita impact: Fayette County (\$90.66) and Kanawha County (\$1.61).
- Countywide per capita impact indicator:⁹ \$4.44

¹ The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) process is a mechanism used to determine the impact and magnitude of damage and resulting needs of individuals, businesses, public sector, and community as a whole. Information collected is used by the State as a basis for the Governor’s request for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and by the President in determining a response to the Governor’s request (44 CFR § 206.33).

² When a Governor’s request for major disaster assistance under the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, as amended (Stafford Act) is under review, a number of primary factors are considered to determine whether assistance is warranted. These factors are outlined in FEMA’s regulations (44 CFR § 206.48). The President has ultimate discretion and decision making authority to declare major disasters and emergencies under the Stafford Act (42 U.S.C. § 5170 and § 5191).

³ Degree of damage to impacted residences:

- Destroyed – total loss of structure, structure is not economically feasible to repair, or complete failure to major structural components (e.g., collapse of basement walls/foundation, walls or roof);
- Major Damage – substantial failure to structural elements of residence (e.g., walls, floors, foundation), or damage that will take more than 30 days to repair;
- Minor Damage – home is damaged and uninhabitable, but may be made habitable in short period of time with repairs; and
- Affected – some damage to the structure and contents, but still habitable.

⁴ By law, Federal disaster assistance cannot duplicate insurance coverage. 42 U.S.C. § 5155 and 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(5).

⁵ Special populations, such as low-income, the elderly, or the unemployed may indicate a greater need for assistance. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

⁶ Ibid. 44 C.F.R. § 206.48(b)(3).

⁷ Based on State population in the 2020 Census.

⁸ Statewide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY23, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2022.

⁹ Countywide Per Capita Impact Indicator for FY23, *Federal Register*, October 1, 2022.