Gov. Gregoire Requests Federal Disaster Declaration For Winter Storm

Local News

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Olympia, WA - Gov. Chris Gregoire has asked President Obama to declare a federal disaster area in 11 Washington counties for damages and emergency response costs suffered during January’s severe winter storm.

“The snow and ice that hit our state last month left widespread damage to public utility systems and roads,” Gregoire said. “It also placed a heavy financial burden on local jurisdictions for debris removal and emergency response at a time when the state, cities and counties face shrinking operational budgets. I’m hopeful we get the financial help necessary to quickly recover from the January storm.”

Preliminary state and federal damage assessments found an estimated $32.3 million in potential eligible damage across the state caused by snow, freezing rain, power outages, rain, fallen trees and limbs, avalanches, falling ice, landslides and storm debris.

Gregoire’s request seeks federal disaster aid for public facility damage in 11 counties—Clallam, Grays Harbor, King, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Pierce, Skamania, Snohomish, Thurston and Wahkiakum.

If the declaration is approved, the resulting Federal Emergency Management Agency public assistance grants will defray 75 per cent of the eligible disaster-related costs, such as repair or replacement of property, debris removal and emergency protective measures.

Gregoire proclaimed an emergency in the state on Jan. 18 because of the winter storm conditions.