



Office of the Governor

Doug Burgum  
GOVERNOR



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## **Burgum requests presidential major disaster declaration for flooding from heavy rain, snowstorm**

State estimates nearly \$9.7M in damage to public infrastructure from three-day October storm and subsequent flooding

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**BISMARCK, N.D. (DEC. 13, 2019)** – Gov. Doug Burgum today requested a presidential major disaster declaration for the impacts of an October storm that dumped heavy rain and snow on a large swath of the state and caused up to \$9.7 million in damage to public infrastructure, according to preliminary assessments.

In a letter directed to President Donald Trump through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Burgum requested that the President declare a major disaster for the period of Oct. 9-26 for 15 counties: Barnes, Foster, Griggs, Grand Forks, Kidder, LaMoure, Logan, Mountrail, Nelson, Sargent, Sheridan, Stutsman, Traill, Walsh and Wells. A copy of the letter and supplemental materials can be viewed [here](#).

“Local governments incurred significant costs as a result of the early October rain and snowstorm, and we appreciate the Trump administration considering our request,” Burgum said. “We’re also grateful for the emergency managers and many other officials who worked diligently with our Department of Emergency Services to compile data and make the case for federal assistance to help local jurisdictions recover from these unprecedented wet conditions.”

If granted, a presidential declaration would unlock FEMA public assistance to help cities, counties and townships pay for the costs of repairing roads and other infrastructure damaged by the storm and subsequent flooding. Preliminary assessments indicate that damage is expected to exceed \$5.6 million. However, at the time of inspection, many damaged sites were still inundated, and the state estimates an additional \$2.1 million will be eligible for assistance when floodwaters recede. There’s also potential for an additional \$2 million in damage that couldn’t be verified due to snow cover.

North Dakota experienced a trio of weather extremes this year, from spring flooding to a severe summer drought to the wettest August-to-October period in 125 years of recordkeeping.

“The cost of three disasters this year adds to the financial burden of jurisdictions that have depleted their road and emergency fund budgets,” Burgum stated in the letter. “Local public works and contractor crews have been struggling to keep up with repairs after sites that had been fixed this spring were once again inundated by fall flooding.”

In addition to public assistance, Burgum also is asking that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program be implemented on a statewide basis to help communities pay for flood mitigation projects that increase resiliency and reduce costs in the long run.

President Trump and FEMA granted Burgum’s request for a presidential disaster declaration in June in response to spring flooding in 19 North Dakota counties. Last month, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue also approved a request for a secretarial disaster designation for 47 of North Dakota’s 53 counties, triggering the federal Emergency Farm Loan Program and Economic Injury Loan Program for farm-related business.

Burgum, working in cooperation with Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and other state agencies, has signed [executive orders](#) waiving certain restrictions on hauling of hay, livestock, propane and other petroleum products to help farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses dealing with the compressed harvest season. The state’s Emergency Commission on Wednesday also approved an [Emergency Feed Transportation Assistance Program](#) to help producers who have verified losses as a result of the extraordinary weather conditions this fall. And last week, officials from nearly a dozen state agencies gathered to [begin flood planning efforts](#) in anticipation of spring flooding in 2020.

The National Weather Service will release its spring flood outlooks for North Dakota on Feb. 13, Feb. 27 and March 12. For more information on flood resource and preparedness information, as well as hotlines and resources for those experiencing depression and/or emotional stress during this extremely challenging period for farmers and ranchers, visit [www.ndresponse.gov](http://www.ndresponse.gov).

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## **CONTACT:**

Mike Nowatzki  
[mnowatzki@nd.gov](mailto:mnowatzki@nd.gov)  
701.328.2424

Mark Staples  
[mstaples@nd.gov](mailto:mstaples@nd.gov)  
701.328.2937

600 E Boulevard Ave.  
Bismarck ND 58505-0001  
PHONE: 701.328.2200

