



Governor Mike Dunleavy STATE OF ALASKA

May 16, 2023

The Honorable Gary Stevens
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Cathy Tilton
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear President Stevens and Speaker Tilton:

On May 13, 2023, I declared a State Disaster Emergency for the Alaska Gateway, Yukon Flats, Copper River, and Kuskpuk Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAA) to assist in response to moderate and severe/record flooding from ice jams and rapid snowmelt that impacted the Taylor Highway near Chicken, the City of and Native Village of Eagle, the unincorporated community of Circle, the unincorporated community of Glennallen, and the unincorporated community of Crooked Creek. The declaration authorizes funds to be made available for the state's public assistance program for emergency response and protective measures and temporary and permanent infrastructure repairs, the state's individual assistance program, to repair or replace damaged homes and essential personal property, for temporary housing, to support homeowners and renters displaced from their homes, and for administrative and disaster management expenses.

To date, there have been no reported losses of life or injury. The impacts to Circle on the Yukon River and Crooked Creek on the Kusokwim River are both being reported as catastrophic and record or near record. In both communities, homes and public infrastructure have been severely impacted by both floodwaters and ballistic ice that has impacted numerous structures. Evacuation and sheltering operations are being conducted, and flood-fighting and initial response operations are continuing.

The City of and Native Village of Eagle on the Yukon River were impacted by moderate flooding and extremely large ice blocks shoved ashore that requires a robust response by the community and the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. In Glennallen, rapid snowmelt is causing local creeks and culverts to exceed capacity, which is inundating public and private infrastructure and overtopping the Glenn Highway.

The impacts to each community are substantial and will require support for emergency response operations, long-term repairs or replacement to public infrastructure, and support to individuals, families, and renters through Individual and Family Grants and Temporary Housing.

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Each community is responding appropriately to the needs of residents with the support of Executive Branch Departments, agencies, and regional tribal organizations. As each community is located within the Unorganized Borough, state support will be critical to immediate response and recovery efforts. I have authorized State Active Duty for members of the Alaska Organized Militia to respond as directed by the State Emergency Operations Center.

The total estimated disaster-related permanent response and recovery costs for this disaster have not yet been quantified; thus, I am limiting expenditures to \$1 million from the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) pursuant to Alaska Statute (AS) 26.23.020 (i) and (k), and per AS 26.23.025 (a), this letter serves as the initial financial plan. When a better understanding of the total disaster costs is available, a revised finance plan will be provided to the Legislature, if necessary.

The current balance of the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) is \$28,819,445, and a supplemental appropriation is not required at this time.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure: Declaration of Disaster Emergency

cc: The Honorable Bert Stedman, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Donald Olson, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Bryce Edgmon, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska House of Representatives
The Honorable Neal Foster, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska House of Representatives
The Honorable Click Bishop, District R, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Mike Cronk, District 36, Alaska House of Representatives
Neil Steinger, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Laura Stidolph, Legislative Director, Office of the Governor

STATE OF ALASKA
DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, on May 11, 2023, the National Weather Service issued a flood warning for an ice jam impacting the Taylor highway near Chicken, Alaska; and

WHEREAS, on May 12, 2023, the National Weather Service issued a flooding warning for an ice jam on the Yukon River that impacted the City of Eagle and the Native Village of Eagle with high water and large blocks of ice that were pushed onshore, which impacted public and private infrastructure. In addition, rapid snowmelt flooding and impacts to public and private infrastructure began in the vicinity of the unincorporated community of Glennallen, Alaska; and

WHEREAS, on May 13, 2023, ice jams occurred on the Yukon River at Circle, Alaska, and on the Kuskokwim River at Crooked Creek, Alaska, which caused record flooding in each community that inundated residential homes, roads, and infrastructure, and required evacuations and sheltering in the communities; and

WHEREAS, the City and Native Village of Eagle are political subdivisions of the State of Alaska within the Unorganized Borough within the Alaska Gateway Regional Education Attendance Area (REAA). The community of Circle and Circle Native Community are unincorporated communities with the Unorganized Borough within the Yukon Flats REAA. The unincorporated community of Glennallen is in the Unorganized Borough within the Copper River REAA. The community of Crooked Creek and the Village of Crooked Creek are in the Unorganized Borough within the Kuspuk REAA; and

WHEREAS, the following conditions exist as a result of this disaster: severe damage to the multiple homes, transportation infrastructure, and property, disruption of power, evacuations, sheltering, and emergency feeding; and,

WHEREAS, the severity and magnitude of the emergency is beyond the timely and effective response and recovery capability of local resources, and there are insufficient regularly appropriated local funds to cover these requirements.

THEREFORE, on this 13th day of May, 2023, under authority granted by Alaska Statute 26.23.020 (c), I hereby declare that a condition of disaster emergency exists in the Alaska Gateway, Yukon Flats, Cooper River, and Kuspuk REAAs, and this condition is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a disaster declaration to provide assistance.

FURTHER, the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is hereby authorized to utilize funds made available for these purposes, which are considered necessary for disaster assistance to include disaster individual and public assistance, temporary housing, and necessary administrative and disaster management expenses. State funds are proposed to be spent under AS 26.23.020 (i) and (k) and AS 26.23.050. The Commissioner of DMVA, or his designee, is the designated State Coordinator and is further authorized to task, as necessary, state departments and agencies in accordance with the State Emergency Operations Plan; and is further authorized to exercise, as necessary, the provisions provided under Alaska Statutes 26.23.020 (g) (1), (2), (3), (5), (6), (7), (9), and (10).

FURTHER, the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is hereby directed to seek and utilize funding made available from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for these purposes, which are considered necessary for disaster assistance and necessary administrative and disaster management expenses.

FURTHER, for the duration of this proclamation and under authority of AS 26.23.020(g)(1) and (7), I specifically order the suspension of those provisions of Alaska Statutes and regulations relating to any requirement to (a) obtain a lease from another state agency prior to entry upon the land; (b) obtain a permit, including land use permits and right of way permits, from another state agency prior to entry upon land; (c) obtain Water Use Permits or rights, including temporary rights, from another state agency prior to utilizing such resources; (d) obtain Fish Habitat Permits or Special Area Permits from another state agency; (e) obtain Wastewater Disposal Permits from another state agency; (f) obtain Section 106 Reviews pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 from another state agency; provided that the foregoing suspensions do not apply to any specific provision the suspension of which would create a violation of federal law or a violation of a requirement for the provision of federal emergency funding, and the foregoing suspensions may be supplemented by my further order to the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs and the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

By:



Mike Dunleavy
Governor