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Governor Dunleavy Declares 2026 Jan Southeast Winter Storm a Disaster

JOINT BASE ELMENDORF-RICHARDSON, Alaska — Governor Mike Dunleavy has issued a disaster declaration in response to a series of severe winter storms impacting Southeast Alaska. This action activates the state's Public Assistance program to support communities as they continue to respond and recover from record-breaking snowfall, extreme cold, and rain. The declaration was made for the City and Borough of Juneau and the City of Hoonah on January 6.

Based on impacts across the region the disaster declaration has been expanded and now identifies the City and Borough of Juneau, City of Hoonah, Chatham Regional Education Attendance Area, Haines Borough, and Municipality of Skagway Borough as areas eligible for State of Alaska Public Assistance.

From December 2025 through early January 2026, the City and Borough of Juneau (CBJ), and other areas of Southeast Alaska, faced relentless winter conditions that resulted in collapsed roofs, blocked storm drains, and sunken vessels. Local snow management resources were quickly overwhelmed, and local leaders remain concerned about heightened avalanche risks and upcoming weather forecasts. CBJ issued an evacuation advisory and opened an emergency shelter to provide shelter for people who resided in the risk areas.

CBJ and the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska officials jointly requested a disaster declaration on January 6 to sustain ongoing response efforts in the Juneau area. That same day the City of Hoonah declared a local disaster and requested assistance. Governor Dunleavy responded immediately, authorizing state recovery programs. Bryan Fisher, Director of the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, praised local leaders for their proactive response and noted that the declaration ensures the state can now provide essential financial support and additional resources.

The State Emergency Operation (SEOC) deployed an Emergency Management Specialist to Juneau on January 8 to coordinate state-level assistance and identify immediate needs. Also, the SEOC has raised its activation level to 2 based upon increased risk to Southeast Alaska.

In addition, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities sent more heavy equipment operators to the region to bolster snow removal and avalanche forecasting. To further alleviate the snow management burden on the city, the Department of Environmental Conservation is permitting the disposal of uncontaminated snow into the Gastineau Channel.

The Public Assistance program focuses on restoring vital infrastructure, including roads, utilities, and communications systems, to their original condition. Under this declaration, local

jurisdictions, tribal organizations, and specific non-profits may be eligible for grants to reimburse the costs of emergency protective measures and infrastructure repairs.

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