



RON DESANTIS
GOVERNOR

April 19, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania, D.C. 20500

Through: Gracia B. Szczech, Regional Administrator
FEMA Region IV
3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road
Atlanta, GA 30341

RE: Request for Increased Cost Share
Hurricane Michael

Dear Mr. President:

I write to request your approval to increase the Federal cost share from 75% to 90% for Hurricane Michael eligible costs of permanent work under section 406 and emergency work under sections 403 and 407 of the Robert T Stafford Disaster Relief Act.

On October 10, 2018, Hurricane Michael made landfall in the City of Mexico Beach, Florida, causing massive destruction to Northwest Florida. On October 11, 2018, you declared a Major Disaster in the State of Florida due to the devastating impacts of Hurricane Michael.

On January 18, 2019, along with my request for FEMA to provide 100% Federal cost share for debris removal and emergency protective measures (emergency work) for the first 45 days from landfall, I also requested FEMA provide a 90% Federal cost share for emergency work thereafter. Subsequently, you granted my request for 45 days of 100% Federal cost share for debris removal and emergency protective measures. That decision significantly improved recovery efforts, for which Hurricane Michael survivors and all Floridians are profoundly grateful.

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Earlier today, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, in conjunction with the National Weather Service, issued its post-storm assessment for Hurricane Michael. Among the findings disclosed by the report, the most significant was the determination that Hurricane Michael made landfall as a category 5 on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale. Hurricane Michael is officially the first hurricane to make landfall in the United States as a category 5 since Hurricane Andrew in 1992, and only the fourth on record.

This determination further validates the unprecedented impact that this storm continues to have on the state of Florida. At this time, I would like to refresh my request to adjust the Federal cost share from 75% to 90%.

Per 44 C.F.R. §206.47(b), an increase in the Federal cost share is recommended when a disaster is so extraordinary that actual Federal obligations meet or exceed the threshold. The clarifying findings made in the post-storm assessment, as well as the damage reported by local governments and state agencies, clearly indicate that this disaster will easily exceed our \$2.6 billion threshold. State agencies alone are reporting over \$1.1 billion in costs.

Estimates from the Joint-Field Office predict that the amount of storm-related debris generated is similar to the amount of debris collected in Louisiana during the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina. This would amount to over \$1 billion in debris removal costs in the affected area.

Furthermore, Hurricane Michael devastated critical infrastructure. In the City of Mexico Beach alone, over 93% of all buildings were reported damaged and just under 50% reported as destroyed. The cost for Northwest Florida to recover and rebuild from this storm will definitively exceed our threshold.

In addition to 44 C.F.R. §206.47(b), 44 C.F.R. §206.47(c), states that in making a recommendation of cost share adjustment, FEMA will consider the impacts of major disaster declarations in the preceding twelve months.

Besides Hurricane Michael's severe impacts to Northwest Florida and new classification as a category 5 hurricane, there are multiple major disaster declarations that heavily impact both the State and the affected area.

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Hurricane Irma (DR4337) resulted in a major disaster declaration designating all 67 counties for disaster assistance. The counties affected by Hurricane Michael were also affected by Hurricane Irma. Even though Hurricane Irma was declared in September 2017, its impacts are still sorely felt. For example, currently only half of Hurricane Irma projects are obligated 18 months after the event. This makes it exceedingly difficult for the state and local communities to replenish their coffers.

Even storms declared prior to Hurricane Irma have outstanding projects that are still within the period of performance within the affected area. For example, there are projects that remain in progress from the 2013 and 2014 Northwest Florida floods (DR4138/DR4177) and Hurricane Hermine (DR4280). These projects range from \$1 million building projects to \$20 million road projects that continue to have a substantial impact on the fiscally constrained counties declared for Hurricane Michael. The non-Federal cost share needed to support all of the projects for these multiple storms is a hardship that both the local and state governments share.

By approving this request, you would provide much needed security and financial relief at both the local and state level. The counties declared for Hurricane Michael continue to experience the catastrophic results that only a category 5 hurricane could produce. Similar category 5 hurricanes have resulted in an increased cost share, with Hurricane Andrew being adjusted to a 100% Federal cost share. Hurricane Michael should be no different.

I have designated Jared Moskowitz, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, as the State Coordinating Officer for our continued response and recovery from Hurricane Michael. He is authorized to provide any further information, assurances, requests or justifications on my behalf.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis
Governor