

For Immediate Release

May 19, 2003

Contact: John Sewell

601-359-2916

Governor Musgrove Asks President Bush for Another Disaster Declaration

(Jackson, MS) – Governor Ronnie Musgrove today requested President Bush to declare a major disaster declaration as a result of the severe weather that impacted the state on May 7, 2003. Musgrove declared a state of emergency for the entire state of Mississippi as a result of the severe weather system that began on May 5 and continued until May 7, 2003.

“We have been dealing with the impact of severe weather for several consecutive weeks, and we need this assistance,” Musgrove said. “I have asked President Bush to declare the areas affected by the latest storms as a disaster area. I’m hopeful he will respond favorably to this request.”

Musgrove sent a letter to President Bush today.

During the period from May 5-7, 2003, the National Weather issued 9-separate tornado watches, 3-Severe Thunderstorms Watches and 5-Flash Flood Watches covering the vast majority of the State, which included 62- Tornado warnings, 86-severe thunderstorm warnings, and 8 flash flood warnings during this time.

Monroe County has experienced two previous major disasters over the last two-years and Chickasaw County have experienced one. The Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) summary sheet states that sixty-five (or 35%) of the 186 structures surveyed in Monroe and Chickasaw Counties were destroyed or sustained major damage.

"The State of Mississippi and its citizens have been ravaged by seven major disasters in the last two and a half years. MEMA is committed to the pursuit of any and all options available to assist our citizens in their recovery process," said Robert Latham, Director of MEMA.

Governor Musgrove’s letter specifically requests Individual Assistance, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, and Small Business Administration loans for the primary counties of Chickasaw and Monroe and the same assistance for the contiguous counties of Calhoun, Clay, Webster, Pontotoc, Lee, Itawamba, and Lowndes.

###