

November 14, 2002

The President  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Through: Kenneth O. Burris, Jr., Regional Director  
FEMA Region IV  
3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road  
Atlanta, GA 30341

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5206 (the Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare a major disaster for the State of Mississippi as a result of the direct effects of tornadoes and damaging winds associated with a massive severe weather system that impacted the State. The incident period for this disaster began on Sunday, November 10 through Monday, November 11, 2002.

During this period of time, the National Weather Service issued 4-separate tornado watches covering the vast majority of the State, 23-tornado warnings for 24-counties, 32-severe thunderstorm warnings for 33-counties. Around 5:00 p.m. on November 10th, an F3 tornado struck in Lowndes County, Mississippi causing one (1) fatality near Crawford and fifty-five injuries in the City of Columbus. Four persons required hospitalization and are reported in stable condition.

Extensive residential structural damage was reported throughout the City of Columbus and surrounding area of Lowndes County. Widespread power outages plunged the City into darkness for two-days. Utility restoration efforts are continuing but over 6,000 customers remain without electricity thus causing disruption to water, sewer services, home cooling, food preparation and commercial enterprises. Public, private, and volunteer organizations are providing shelter, food, water, and other vital life support services to affected citizens.

In response to the situation, I have taken appropriate action under State law and directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan on November 10, 2002, in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. I declared a State of Emergency on November 11, 2002 to exist in Alcorn, Attala, Lafayette, Leake, Lowndes, and other counties of the State affected for the duration of this disaster. I issued Executive Order 864 activating the Mississippi National Guard to State Active Duty to provide military support to civil authorities.

On November 11, 2002, a joint Federal, State, and local survey of the damaged area were requested. On November 13, 2002, surveys were begun in the affected areas to determine the extent of damage and losses sustained by public and private interests. Initial assessments indicated the hardest hit area existed in the City of Columbus and surrounding areas of Lowndes County, Mississippi.

I have determined, pursuant to 44 CFR Section 206.36, that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local governments and that supplementary Federal assistance is necessary. I am specifically requesting Public Assistance for Lowndes and Lafayette Counties and Individual Assistance, including the Individual and Households Program (IHP) Option 1, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Crisis Counseling, and Small Business Administration disaster loans for Lowndes County and the contiguous counties of Monroe, Clay, Oktibbeha, and Noxubee. I am also requesting hazard mitigation for the entire State.

Preliminary estimates of the types and amount of assistance needed under the Stafford Act are tabulated in Enclosures A and B. Estimated requirements for assistance from certain Federal agencies under other statutory authorities are tabulated in Enclosure C.

On October 1, 2002, the State was declared a major disaster as a result of damages associated with Tropical Storm Isidore and Hurricane Lili. Thus far, State obligations for this disaster has exceeded \$3,027,209 million dollars. The national recession has led to a reduction in state tax revenues. This, coupled with the recent disaster declaration, has clearly exceeded the resources of the state and the local governments capacity to fully recover from this current setback without federal disaster assistance.

The following information is furnished on the nature and amount of State and local resources that have been or will be used to alleviate the conditions of this disaster:

**Office of the Governor** is providing overall command and control, implemented emergency powers through proclamation of a State of Emergency and issued an Executive Order placing the Mississippi National Guard on state active duty, surveyed damaged areas with state and federal officials, and met with affected city and county local officials.

**Mississippi Emergency Management Agency** deployed Mobile Operations Command Center and Local Liaison Officer to coordinate resource requests, conduct initial and preliminary damage assessments, providing overall disaster response management, coordination and control, technical and operations support to state and local governments, and preparing to administer, coordinate and manage recovery efforts.

**Mississippi Department of Human Services** supported mass care requirements including shelter operations management and emergency human services to affected residents and conducting damage assessment.

**Mississippi Department of Health** coordinated emergency medical transportation and is coordinating water supply system operational status, special needs population protection, medical system operability, issuing public health related and boil water advisories, and conducting laboratory analysis on potable water samples.

**Mississippi Department of Transportation** has cleared state and federal aid road systems and is assisting with county and secondary road debris clearing.

**Mississippi Development Authority/Energy Division** has established and maintained contact with affected electrical power providers to ascertain power restoration priorities, and coordinate restoration information with other utility service providers.

**Mississippi Military Department** supported military support to civil authorities by activating 34-Guardsman to assist with security, debris clearance and disposal.

**Mississippi Department of Education** provided support for sheltering and coordinated damage assessment in affected public school districts and provided guidance to education officials on reopening or relocating schools throughout the affected areas.

**Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality** conducted assessment of all wastewater treatment facilities and monitored cleanup operations in the affected areas, provided guidance on debris management and disposal.

**Mississippi Department of Public Safety** provided aerial support for damage assessment and provided security patrols in City of Columbus for augmenting local law enforcement.

**Department of Insurance** is providing advice and guidance to policyholders.

**Mississippi Department of Corrections** provided security personnel to augment local law enforcement and supplied inmates to assist with debris cleanup.

**Mississippi Forestry Commission** is monitoring and assessing timber damage.

**Mississippi Department of Mental Health** is providing professional counseling to regular clients and assessing need for submitting grant application for Crisis Counseling services to those traumatized by personal loss.

**Mississippi Board of Animal Health** personnel from the State Veterinarian office is coordinating sheltering and care for injured animals and pets.

**Mississippi Civil Air Patrol Wing** provided aerial surveillance and damage assessment support to state and local government.

**Mississippi Commission on Volunteer Services** coordinated volunteer support with the MSVOAD.

**Mississippi Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster** provided volunteer relief efforts with other Mass Care agencies to provide shelter, mass food preparation, mobile feeding units, and potable water.

I hereby certify that for this major disaster, the State and local governments will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. Total expenditures are expected to exceed \$5,639,900, in accordance with the table in Enclosure D.

I have designated Leon K. Shaifer as the State Coordinating Officer and Robert R. Latham, Jr., as the Governor's Authorized Representative for this request. They will work with the Federal Emergency Management Agency in damage assessments and are authorized to provide any information, assurances, requests or justification on my behalf.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

Enclosures



**ENCLOSURE A TO STATEMENT OF WORK ORDER REQUEST**

**Estimated Requirements for Individual Assistance  
Under the Stafford Act**

<b>County</b>  (List each requested county)	<b>Assistance to Individuals and Households</b>					<b>Other Programs</b>  ( Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Legal Services, and Crisis Counseling)
	Temporary Housing  (Indicate No.)	Repairs	Replacement	Permanent Housing Construction	Other Assistance	
LOWNDES	167				\$1,740,625	\$175,000
<b>TOTALS</b>	167				<b>\$1,740,625</b>	<b>\$175,000</b>

**Profile of Affected County Populations**

**Lowndes County, Mississippi**

The 2000 census list Mississippi population at 2,844,658. The 2000 population of Lowndes County is 61,586. The racial composition is 56.5% White, 41.6% Black, 0.2% American Indian, 0.5% Asian and 1.1% Hispanic. 11.2% of the population is over age 65. 28.6% of the population is under age 18. 11,142 persons over age 5 have some form of disability. 21.3% are below the poverty level. The median household money income is \$35,202 or \$3,872 above the median household money income State average of \$31,330. The per capita income is \$16,514 or \$661 above the average state per capita money income of \$15,853. The land area contains 502 square miles with a population density of 122.6 persons per square mile. There are 22,849 households with an average 2.61 of persons per household. The median household income for 1999 was \$32,123. The homeownership rate is 66.5%. The Columbus Air Force Base (CAFB), headquarters of the 14<sup>th</sup> Flying Training Wing, is also located in this community. The base houses over 250 aircraft and employs approximately 2,600 people.



ENCLOSURE TO THE DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Requirements for Public Assistance  
Under the Stafford Act

**CATEGORY**

COUNTY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
<b>Lowndes</b>	\$1,142,000	\$464,000	-0-	-0-	\$17,050,408	\$1,775,000	\$387,568	\$20,818,976
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,142,000</b>	<b>\$464,000</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>-0-</b>	<b>\$17,050,408</b>	<b>\$1,775,000</b>	<b>\$387,568</b>	<b>\$20,818,976</b>



ENCLOSURE TO THE DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs

County	SBA Home Loans	SBA Business Loans	FSA Loans	NRCS	FHWA	USACE	OTHER
Lowndes	\$	\$	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
<b>Totals</b>	\$	\$	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

ENCLOSURE TO ASSISTANCE REQUEST



I certify that for this current disaster, State and local government expenditures and obligations will include the non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act. As stated in my basic letter, and based on information available at this time, tabulation of these estimated expenditures and obligations are as follows:

CATEGORY OF ASSISTANCE	AMOUNT	
	STATE	LOCAL
<b>Individual Assistance:</b>		
<b>“Other Assistance” under the Individuals and Households Program</b>	\$435,156	-0-
<b>Other (specify)</b>		
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$435,156</b>	<b>-0-</b>
<b>Public Assistance:</b>		
<b>Category A - Debris Removal</b>	\$142,750	\$142,750
<b>Category B – Emergency Protective Measures</b>	\$58,000	\$58,000
<b>Category C – Roads and Bridges</b>		
<b>Category D – Water Control Facilities</b>		
<b>Category E – Buildings and Equipment</b>	\$2,131,301	\$2,131,301
<b>Category F – Utilities</b>	\$93,750	\$350,000
<b>Category G – Other (Parks, Recreational Facilities, etc.)</b>	\$48,446	\$48,446
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,474,247</b>	<b>\$2,730,497</b>
<b>Grand Total:</b>	<b>\$2,909,403</b>	<b>\$2,730,497</b>