



**BILL LEE**  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF TENNESSEE

September 30, 2024

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Through: Mr. Robert D. Samaan  
Regional Administrator FEMA Region IV  
3005 Chamblee-Tucker Road  
Atlanta, GA 30341

Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 401 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5121-5207 (Stafford Act), and implemented by 44 CFR § 206.36, I request that you declare an expedited major disaster declaration for the State of Tennessee as a result of record-setting rainfall and flooding that occurred September 26, 2024, and continues to be an ongoing event under EM-3620-TN.

Following several days of heavy rainfall, Hurricane Helene moved northward toward eastern Tennessee. Prior to the Hurricane Helene's arrival, some areas had already received 4-5" of rain east of the Cumberland Plateau. The broad precipitation shield from Helene brought extensive tropical rainfall as the storm moved northward toward Eastern Tennessee. The system weakened to a tropical storm and eventually a post-tropical cyclone. Storm totals between September 26-28 ranged from an additional 4-6" with isolated areas receiving up to 12". This exceptionally heavy rainfall extended over the state line to North Carolina where some areas received even higher totals. The river systems were quickly inundated as the water continued to move.

An upper-level low pressure system over West Tennessee interacted with Helene and stalled over Middle Tennessee and Southern Kentucky. The wind orientation caused a rain shadow effect in East Tennessee for September 28, ceasing rainfall and allowing water to continue moving through the river system and rivers crested overnight. Several rivers were near or surpassed record crests during this event, including the French Broad and Pigeon Rivers. Numerous flash flood emergencies were issued in response to significant threat to life and property.

In addition to hydrologic products, the National Weather Service issued wind products across most of the state in anticipation of tropical storm force winds. These strong winds, combined

with saturated soils, resulted in many downed trees across East Tennessee.

The catastrophic flash flooding was most profoundly felt in the northeastern portion of the state, primarily in Carter, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington counties. Numerous bridges and roads were compromised in those areas due to flood waters and landslides, in addition to widespread structural and infrastructure destruction.

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) reported multiple rivers nearing or exceeding historical flood stage records, and multiple dams overtopped or were under imminent threat of failure. As a result of this, entire towns and communities were forced to evacuate during a time when evacuation routes were obstructed, inundated or destroyed by debris-filled floodwaters. TVA issued a Condition Red for the Nolichucky Dam on the evening of September 27. In coordination with TVA, the National Weather Service issued a Flash Flood Emergency to emphasize the need for evacuations along and downstream due to a potential imminent dam failure. Status returned to advanced monitoring as of September 28. Several other dams on the Tennessee River system, including the Watauga and Douglas, had record amounts of water near or exceeding summer pool levels and continue to manage discharge to protect downstream waterways.

The water level at Nolichucky Dam in Greene County was at an elevation of 1,266.03 feet, confirmed by the U.S. Geological Survey, which corresponds to a 1-in-13,000 return based on preliminary estimates from TVA. The rainfall for the entire basin averaged 9.7 inches and corresponds to a 1-in-4,500-year rain event for the basin (preliminary TVA estimate). Some 2.3 million acre-feet of rain fell on the Douglas watershed - 70 percent more than the total volume of the lake at the top of the gates. TVA's Watauga Dam on the Watauga River in Carter County reached an elevation of 1,970.29 feet, which is a new pool or record and broke the previous record by about three feet.

This event left a wide path of destruction with homes destroyed, businesses underwater, widespread power outages, and significant damage to roads and bridges. First responders performed swift water and air rescues of citizens trapped inside and atop vehicles, residences, businesses, and hospitals.

Infrastructure impacts included approximately 114,824 customers without power the afternoon of September 28, and many areas are expected to still be without power for days or weeks. As of September 30, approximately 20 water treatment facilities reported disruptions impacting 164,204 Tennesseans. Of those, five counties have issued boil water advisories that are in effect for approximately 119,770 customers. AT&T, Verizon, the Tennessee National Guard, the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security, and the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) continue to work diligently to move resources to restore disrupted communication systems.

Multiple state routes closed due to road impacts including but not limited to SR 91, SR 143, SR 159, SR 361, SR 37, and Hwy 19 in Carter County; Interstate 40 in Cocke County; SR 340, SR 35, SR 70, US 321, SR 107 Bridge, SR 351 Bridge, SR 353 Bridge, Allen Bridge, Snapps Bridge, and Poplar Spring Bridge in Green County; SR 343 in Hamblen County; SR 31, SR 66, and SR 94 in Hawkins County; SR 34 and SR 167 in Johnson County; SR 36, SR 81, SR 352, and Interstate 26 in Unicoi

County; and SR 81 Bridge and SR 353 Bridge in Washington County.

On September 27, approximately 77 school districts closed across Tennessee due to the threat of inclement weather. Out of those, the following school districts announced closures from September 30 to October 4, 2024: Carter County Schools, Cocke County Schools, Greene County Schools, Greeneville City Schools, Hancock County Schools, Hawkins County Schools, Johnson County Schools, Newport Grammar School, Rogersville City Schools, Sullivan County Schools, and Washington County Schools. Unicoi County Schools are also closed due to damage but had a previously scheduled fall break for this week.

Additionally, the following school districts and campuses are closed on September 30 due to storm and flood impacts: Kingsport City Schools, Milligan University, Tennessee College of Applied Technology Elizabethton, Northeast State Community College, Northeast State Community College at Kingsport, and Northeast State Community College at Gray. East Tennessee State University and Elizabethton City Schools are closed September 30 to October 2, 2024. Walters State Community College Niswonger Campus and Walters State Community College Newport Center are physically closed September 30 to October 2, 2024, but classes will take place virtually.

As a result of the severe storms and flooding, all Tennessee State Offices are currently closed in the following counties: Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Sullivan, Washington, and Unicoi.

In accordance with T.C.A. 58-2-107(b)(2), the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA) maintained a state of emergency in connection with this event. This incident was added to the ongoing response operations under state law and directed by the execution of the Tennessee Emergency Management Plan (TEMP).

### **Response and Recovery Actions**

In response to the needs of our citizens and jurisdictions, Tennessee's state and local governments, volunteer organizations, and electrical cooperatives planned and responded in a manner that saved both life and property.

Tennessee's State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) was staffed by the TEMA employees and Emergency Services Coordinators (ESCs) from multiple agencies and partner organizations. Multiple state agencies continue to be involved in the response coordination to include: Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA); Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance (TDCI); Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE); Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC); Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA); Tennessee Department of General Services (TDGS); Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS); Tennessee Department of Health (TDH); Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT); Tennessee Emergency Management Agency (TEMA); Tennessee National Guard (TNG); Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA); and the Tennessee Highway Patrol (THP) component of the Department of Safety and Homeland Security.

As of September 30, the SEOC has coordinated 231 resource missions to support local officials. Resource missions included volunteer assistance, bathroom trailers, cots, traffic control devices,

swift water and air rescues, debris removal to clear roads, signage, coordination of strike teams, shelter coordination, assistance with grid area search, and generators to provide power.

The American Red Cross (ARC) has opened a total of four overnight shelters providing beds, feeding, comfort kits and clean up kits for displaced individuals and families. The overnight shelters provided beds for 100 displaced individuals and families for a total of three nights. ARC is also providing over 300 meals a day for affected individuals and currently have 27 ARC volunteers providing disaster relief services. Various churches in the affected areas have also opened a total of four independently operated shelters to provide shelter and feeding for displaced residents.

Several volunteer organizations have been involved in disaster relief activities, including Civil Air Patrol who are monitoring the Crisis Clean-Up call line. TN Baptist Disaster Relief has provided eight pallets of MREs, two truckloads of water and have also provided chainsaw debris removal services. Salvation Army is serving 1,000 meals per day. Team Rubicon has provided chainsaw and heavy equipment operations. Second Harvest Food Bank is providing water, non-perishable food and snacks. Grindstone Ministries has provided Debris Clean-up Teams. Upper Cumberland Healthcare Coalition provided generator fuel and cots. Tennessee Fire Chaplains have provided four shower trailers. United Way of East TN has provided Volunteer Management Services and the management of financial donations.

Various churches in the affected areas have also opened a total of four independently operated shelters to provide shelter and feeding for displaced residents.

While volunteer and Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) assistance has been vital in supporting the recovery for citizens and businesses in impacted areas, many unmet needs remain as response missions continue.

### **Casualties**

The Tennessee Department of Health attributed the September 26 extreme weather and flooding to the deaths of three Tennesseans. The deaths occurred in Johnson, Knox, and Unicoi counties. The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation (TBI) report states that as of September 29 authorities continue their efforts to locate missing Tennesseans while working with limited call service and infrastructure challenges in the impacted areas. Authorities believe that many of these individuals are safe, but unable to presently identify themselves as such. The search continues for 62 people in Washington County, four people in Johnson County, 47 people in Unicoi County, and an additional 40 people in other surrounding impacted counties. As of this letter, TBI has received 337 calls seeking information about individuals in East Tennessee.

### **Impacts to High Poverty and Vulnerable Communities**

The impacts of the September severe weather event hit hardest in some of the most economically disadvantaged areas in the State. Because of fiscal constraints, the State and many of these counties are still recovering from the long-term effects of previous major disaster declarations including FEMA-4427-DR-TN, FEMA-4471-DR-TN, FEMA-4476-DR-TN, FEMA-4514-DR-TN (COVID-19), FEMA-4541-DR-TN, FEMA-4550-DR-TN, FEMA-4594-DR-TN, FEMA-4601-DR-TN, FEMA-4609-DR-TN, FEMA-4637-DR-TN, FEMA-4645-DR-TN, FEMA-4691-

DR-TN, FEMA-4701-DR-TN, FEMA-4712-DR-TN, FEMA-4729-DR-TN, FEMA-4735-DR-TN, FEMA-4742-DR-TN, FEMA-4751-DR-TN, and FEMA-4792-DR-TN.

County	Population	% Elderly	% Disabled	Median HH Income	% Below Poverty	% Pre-Disaster Unemployment
National	331,449,281	17.7%	13.6%	\$77,719	12.5%	4.3%
State (TN)	6,910,840	17.5%	14.5%	\$67,631	14.0%	3.0%
Carter	56,356	14.9%	22.2%	\$47,994	18.1%	3.9%
Cocke	35,999	21.7%	23.4%	\$45,110	20.1%	4.4%
Grainger	23,527	20.7%	23.3%	\$47,098	17.6%	3.9%
Greene	70,152	22.4%	24.4%	\$54,261	14.0%	5.1%
Hamblen	64,499	19.8%	20.3%	\$53,210	20.6%	3.6%
Hawkins	56,721	21.5%	23.0%	\$53,647	16.9%	3.9%
Johnson	17,948	23.1%	21.9%	\$47,571	21.6%	3.4%
Unicoi	17,928	23.4%	22.2%	\$49,855	16.7%	4.2%
Washington	133,001	19.2%	19.2%	\$60,729	18.1%	3.5%

Sources: 2020 US Census Bureau; 2022 American Community Survey; Tennessee Dept of Labor & Workforce Development Unemployment Statistics, July 2024

Many households suffered food loss across the state due to power outages and flood impacts. The below chart provides an overview of SNAP benefits distributed in the heavily impacted counties.

County	Individuals	Caseloads	Issuance Amount
Carter	6,624	3,433	\$1,187,050
Cocke	6,497	3,424	\$1,152,016
Grainger	2,861	1,402	\$510,792
Greene	7,472	3,888	\$1,352,956
Hamblen	7,605	3,742	\$1,426,509
Hawkins	7,414	3,609	\$1,352,679
Johnson	2,328	1,284	\$393,277
Unicoi	1,895	1,047	\$339,604
Washington	11,306	6,106	\$2,103,275
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>51,141</b>	<b>26,533</b>	<b>\$9,307,366</b>

Source: TN Dept of Human Service SNAP Distribution September 2024

### State Actions

Local emergency management agencies handled many requests for critical assistance emanating from each city and county, as needed, and requested assistance from the state when their resources were exhausted. In addition, local emergency management agencies provided consistent situational awareness to the SEOC through conference calls, emails, and the state's situational awareness platform - WebEOC. A summary of actions taken during the state's response are as follows:

Tennessee Department of Agriculture

- Disaster Animal Response Team on stand-by to assist with pet sheltering and livestock assistance. Also has trailer and personnel resources ready to deploy where needed.
- AG Crime Unit available for Law Enforcement assistance for debris removal.
- Provided clarification that retail food stores without a water supply may remain open but cannot prepare fresh food products. Deli, bakery, meat departments, etc. would not be allowed to operate without water, but retail stores could still sell prepackaged products such as canned goods, bags of chips, whole produce, candy bars, beverages, etc.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-16 response.

#### Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance

- Deployed eight Wide Area Search Teams to Unicoi and Washington counties.
- Deployed eight Swiftwater Teams to effected areas.
- TN Fire Chaplains deployed shower and bathroom trailers to effected areas.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-4 response.

#### Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency

- Deployed officers and boats to the Unicoi County Hospital to assist with evacuation efforts.
- Deployed four officers to Cocke County to assist with evacuations due to flooding.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-13 response.

#### Tennessee Valley Authority

- Monitored dams along the Tennessee Rivers systems and notified local emergency managers and the public of potential dangers and dam failures.
- Monitored river levels as waters rose above major and record flood stages.
- Evaluated dam structures after water crested to make sure all infrastructure was undamaged, intact, and stable.

#### Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation

- Tracked power outages and stayed in regular communication with Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) representatives.
- Environmental Divisions assisted counties with debris disposal issues, including inspection and approval of sites for temporary debris storage areas, run off issues, and debris bum approvals. TDEC continues to assist with other waste and potential hazardous materials left behind (drums and tanks).
- Environmental responders and field office staff provided on-scene support and remain in communication with County EMAs to render assistance.
- Provided TVA with a list of impacted water and wastewater systems.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-12 response.

#### Tennessee Department of General Services

- Coordinated with the SEOC for the purchase and rental of equipment, accessories, services and transportation of resources as needed.

- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-7 response.

#### Tennessee Department of Health

- Provided continuous monitoring of sheltering operations to assess needs for health support.
- Staff also assisted with fatality and injury confirmations.
- Deployed morgue trailers to effected areas.
- Deployed two nurse strike teams to serve shelters in the Tri Cities area.
- Purchased TDAP, Hepatitis A, and Flu vaccines to offer to first responders and affected residents.
- Deployed a FORTS shelter, building generator, and road signs to effected areas.
- Collaborated with TBI on missing persons.
- Collaborated with Northeast Forensic Center to identify remains.
- Deployed ambulance strike teams to Carter and Unicoi counties.
- Provided support to the Regional Medical Communication Centers in Northeast and East Regions.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-8 response.

#### Tennessee Department of Human Services

- Personnel staffed the SEOC to facilitate communication and resources between Human Services, TEMA, FEMA, American Red Cross, and various other agencies to assist with disaster needs for response and recovery.

#### Tennessee Department of Transportation

- Monitored damages of roadways, created maps of closed roadways, and continuously updated with new data.
- Deployed teams to assess bridges and roadway damages.
- Plan for and cleanup of debris impeding the operations of roadways.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-1 response.

#### Tennessee National Guard

- Operated search and rescue with hoist operations across Northeast Tennessee.
- Coordinated with state and local partners with air imagery.
- Assisted with local response in effected areas.
- Deployed debris team to Johnson County.

#### Tennessee Emergency Management Agency

- Monitored and documented counties with damages.
- Provided response to resource requests for potable water, pumps, signs, and other needs.
- Deployed District Coordinators to provide response and support to local governments and emergency management agencies.

- Facilitated statewide coordination calls to support Regional Coordination Centers, county emergency management agencies, VOADs, and to identify and meet resource gaps.

#### Tennessee Department of Safety, Tennessee Highway Patrol

- Troopers assisted multiple local law enforcement agencies with traffic control, water rescue, and other general law enforcement duties in Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington counties.
- THP Aviation deployed to locate people and direct rescue in Cocke County.
- Manned the SEOC to coordinate ESF-13 response.

#### Tennessee Bureau of Investigation

- Established a hotline to coordinate reports of missing persons in the areas effected by severe flooding.

#### Tennessee Department of Education

- Provided support to area school districts affected by the flooding.

### **Local Actions and Impacts (Individual Assistance)**

#### Carter County

Carter County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. Multiple swiftwater rescue teams were deployed across the county and the Elizabethton City Fire Department was able to save multiple individuals stranded in flood waters. One officer was reported as injured during a rescue effort. The Sycamore Shoals hospital required evacuation and over 36 patients were transported. Numerous homes are reported as destroyed and entire neighborhoods are reported to be flooded. The American Red Cross opened a shelter in Cloudland High Schools, which at its peak had over 33 survivors and three dogs. One of the primary water plants within the county is currently shut down and approximately 5,000 individuals are currently without water. Boil water advisories are in place and emergency water is being provided to impacted citizens. Radio, landline, and cellular communication infrastructure is impacted and communication across the county continues to be an issue. Multiple roads continue to be closed, including Hwy 321, SR-143, and SR-159, and local governments assets are heavily impacted. Examples of impacted infrastructure include the Carter County Courthouse and multiple sheriff's office vehicles.

#### Cocke County

Cocke County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. The mayor of the City of Newport ordered an evacuation notice due to reports of a possible dam failure in Waterville. While the dam did not ultimately fail, waters did overtop the dam and downtown Newport was inundated with flood waters causing widespread damages and multiple swiftwater rescue teams were deployed throughout the community. The City of Newport serves as the county seat where a shelter was opened in the Newport Community Center. A proportion of I-40 was destroyed in Cocke County and law enforcement evacuated motorists. In addition to power outages and water issues, the wastewater plant is currently shut down due to flood impacts.



### Grainger County

Grainger County is impacted by widespread power outages across the Appalachian Electric Utility service area that were damaged by tropical storm force winds and gusts. Debris has impacted roadways across the county.

### Greene County

Greene County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. The county is experiencing power outages, impacted roadways, and severe water outages. Approximately 8,000 residents are without water as of September 30 and five sites are open for residents to pick up emergency water. The State continues to receive evolving impact information from Greene County.

### Hamblen County

Hamblen County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. The Lowland Wastewater Treatment Plant was shut down due to flooding and lack of power. Multiple roads continue to be closed, including Highway 343, where tree and powerline debris maintains obstruction; as well as, bridge inundation from floodwaters along the Nolichucky River. Numerous homes are reported as destroyed. More than 7,000 homes and businesses throughout the county lost power at the peak of the storms. Radio, landline, and cellular communication infrastructure is impacted and communication across the county continues to be an issue.

### Hawkins County

Hawkins County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. The county health department closed due to flooding and lack of power. Communication towers covering the county relied on generator power and fuel to maintain operational capabilities. Individuals with medical needs reported trapped and rescued on Highway 31, in Mooresburg. It was advised there were powerline and trees across the roadway in both directions; and that alternate routes were unavailable due to blockages. Multiple chainsaw and debris removal crews requested and required for reported rescues and to open roads obstructed from downed trees and powerlines. Numerous homes are reported as destroyed. More than 15,000 homes and businesses throughout the county lost power at the peak of the storms.

### Johnson County

Johnson County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. Carderview District Public Water System shut down and electricity was lost to most of the area. Residents who continued to have water were placed on a boil water advisory. Roadways and bridges have been compromised in many areas of Johnson County. Evacuation orders were in place due to rising flood waters. Red Cross opened a shelter for displaced individuals and families providing meals, comfort kits and a place to sleep. Swift water rescue teams were activated. At this time, there has been one confirmed fatality in Johnson County as 4 residents continue to be unaccounted for. The National Guard continues to be deployed to assist with cleanup of debris removal to clear roads and to allow for restoration of utilities to Johnson County. There were reports of an unknown amount of fuel leaking from an underground storage tank. The County Mayor of Johnson County signed an executive order declaring a State of Emergency for the entire county. The flooding caused significant damage to homes and the infrastructure of the county endangering the lives of local

residents.

### Unicoi County

Unicoi County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts; including one confirmed fatality. Unicoi Hospital suffered total inundation requiring boat and rooftop air rescue. Rescues of motorists stranded on flooded section of Interstate. Erwin Utilities Authority had a conserve water request when three plants lost power, including Erwin Wastewater Treatment Plant. Temple hill pump station is offline due to flooding. Nuclear Fuels Services (NFS) in Unicoi County is running under generator battery power and with no water. Multiple roads and bridges closed and destroyed. Numerous homes and businesses are reported as destroyed. Unicoi County continues coordination to identifying missing persons and no contact persons. According to TBI, there are 47 individuals that contact hasn't been established with.

### Washington County

Washington County continues to experience widespread flooding impacts. An evacuation order was issued for Embreeville due to rising flood waters. Dozens of homes in the Embreeville community and other parts of Washington County have been destroyed. Power outages continue and roadways continue to be closed, including SR-81. Washington County continues coordination to identifying missing persons and no contact persons. According to TBI, there are 62 individuals that contact hasn't been established with.

### **Financial Exhaustion**

Since January 2023, the State of Tennessee has experienced several significant non-Presidential disaster events, resulting in hundreds of State and local missions in support of ongoing transportation incidents, search and rescue incidents, severe weather, fire, and hazardous material incidents. The following provides a snapshot of a subset of the missions, outside of the purview of the Stafford Act, that the State together with its local governmental entities have managed on their own, further exhausting resources, to such an extent that they have strained and will continue to impact budgets for current and past calendar years.

- On January 31, 2023, the National Weather Service issues a Winter Storm Advisory, Winter Storm Warning, and Ice Storm Warning for west Tennessee counties. Ice accumulations caused downed trees and line with power outages. Department of Transportation deployed crews for plowing and salting roads. Multiple county schools closed. Multiple vehicle crashes resulted in blocked roadways.
- On February 15, 2023, the National Weather Service issued a severe storm watch conducive for tornadic activity. Multiple tornado watches occurred throughout the evening. Power outages, flooding, washed-out culverts, road blockages, and structural damages were reported. Multiple school systems closed or chose to open on a two-hour delay.
- On March 24, 2023, Severe weather occurred in west and middle Tennessee bringing power outages, downed trees, road closures, localized flash flooding, and other wind damage. Some structural damage and a gas leak were reported in the city of Fayetteville, Lincoln County. Peak power outages included 71,951 customers.

- On Thursday March 14, 2024, the National Weather Service issued a tornado watch in west Tennessee. Additional thunderstorm warnings were issued in multiple counties throughout the state. Additionally, a Tornado Warning was issued in Franklin County. Wind damage and minor electrical outages were reported.
- On March 17, 2024, the National Weather Service issued a severe weather alert in Memphis. A freeze warning was issued for Lake, Obion, Weakley, Henry, Dyer, Benton, Gibson, and Carroll counties which remained in effect until the next morning. Minor damages due to frozen pipes were reported throughout Western Tennessee.
- On March 20, 2024, the State Watch Point received notification from Fentress County EMA of three wildfires at 5127 Round Mountain Road in Jamestown, 4059 Rugby Pike in Allardt, and 1342 N York Highway in Jamestown. Fentress Fire, Allardt Fire, Mount Haden Fire, Fentress EMA, and State Forestry responded.
- On April 2, 2024, the SEOC was activated to Level 4 for severe weather across the state. A cold front with heavy rain, high winds, hail, and multiple tornadoes passed across the state. Five commercial buildings were damaged by a tornado in the City of Sunbright.
- On May 25, 2024, the State Emergency Operations Center was activated to Level 4 due to multiple flood watches, severe thunderstorm watches/warnings, and several tornado warnings across the State. Numerous trees and powerlines were reported down across the State and over 25 structures were damaged.

### **Severity and Magnitude**

Given these factors, along with the impact of experiencing 20 Major Disaster Declarations in the last five years, the severity and magnitude of this disaster is such that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the state and the affected local governments. Federal assistance under the Stafford Act is necessary to supplement the efforts and available resources of the state, local governments, organizations, and compensation by insurance for disaster-related losses.

I am requesting a Major Disaster Declaration for Individual Assistance for the following counties: Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington counties. This request encompasses the Individuals and Households Program, Crisis Counseling, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Disaster Case Management, Disaster Legal Services, and Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance.

I also request for Public Assistance (Categories A-G) for the following counties: Carter, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington, including support of sheltering and Direct Federal Assistance for those activities that the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency deem necessary. Additionally, I request the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program statewide. The State of Tennessee has completed a Standard State Hazard Mitigation Plan which is effective until October 9, 2028. As additional damages are discovered and reported, this request may be followed up to amend this request for additional counties for Individual Assistance or Public Assistance at a later date.

For Public Assistance Categories A-B, I am requesting a 100 percent federal cost share for eligible expenses incurred in the first 45 days of response starting September 26, 2024.

I have designated TEMA Director Patrick C. Sheehan as the State Coordinating Officer and Governor's Authorized Representative for this request. He will work with FEMA in assessing and validating damages and may provide further information or justifications on my behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bill Lee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a long, sweeping underline.

Bill Lee  
Governor

Enclosures  
OMB No. 1660-0009/FEMA Form 010-0-13

**DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
REQUEST FOR PRESIDENTIAL DISASTER DECLARATION  
MAJOR DISASTER OR EMERGENCY**

OMB Control Number 1660-0009  
Expires 06/30/2026

1. Request Date Sep 27, 2024

**Burden Disclosure Notice**

Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 9 hours per response. The burden estimate includes the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and submitting the form. This collection of information is required to obtain a benefit. You are not required to respond to this collection of information unless it displays a valid OMB control number. Send comments regarding the accuracy of the burden estimate and any suggestions for reducing the burden to: Information Collections Management, Department of Homeland Security, Federal Emergency Management Agency, 500 C Street SW, Washington, DC 20472, Paperwork Reduction Project (1660-0009). **NOTE: Do not send your completed form to this address.**

Completion of this form including applicable attachments satisfies legal requirements for emergency and major disaster declaration requests under 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170 and 5191, respectively, as implemented at 44 C.F.R. §§ 206.35 and 206.36. Failure to use this form may result in a failure to meet these requirements and/or a delay in processing the request.

2a. Name of State (as defined in Stafford Act 102, 42 U.S.C. § 5122) or Indian tribal government requesting declaration.  Tennessee	2b. Population (as reported by 2020 Census) or estimated population of Indian tribal government's damaged area(s). 6,910,840
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3. Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Name Bill Lee, Governor	4. Designation of State or Tribal Coordinating Officer upon declaration (if available) and phone number Patrick C. Sheehan, Director, TEMA, Military Department, 615.741.9987
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5. Designation of Governor's Authorized Representative or Tribal Chief Executive Representative upon declaration (if available) and phone number  
 Patrick C. Sheehan, Director, TEMA, Military Department, 615.741.9987

6. Declaration Request For:  Major Disaster (Stafford Act Sec. 401)  Emergency (Stafford Act Sec. 501 (a))

7. Incident Period: Beginning Date Sep 26, 2024 End Date \_\_\_\_\_ or  Continuing

If requesting a "continuing" incident period, enclose an official statement from a qualified Federal Government agency acknowledged as a national authority in a specific incident field (e.g., United States Geological Survey for seismic incidents, the National Weather Service for flooding).

7b. Type of incident (Check all that apply)

Drought     Earthquake     Explosion     Fire     Flood     Hurricane     Landslide     Mudslide  
 Severe Storm     Snowstorm  
 (rain, high water, wind-driven, rain, hail, lightning)     (Must include Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data)     Straight-Line Winds  
 Tidal Wave     Tornado     Tropical Depression     Tropical Storm     Tsunami     Volcanic Eruption     Winter Storm  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Description of damages (Short description of impacts of disaster on affected area and population). Include additional details in enclosed Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's cover letter.  
 The remnants of tropical cyclone Helene is causing widespread flooding destruction across Tennessee, especially in the northeastern portion of the State. There are countless homes destroyed, businesses underwater, widespread power outages, widespread water/wastewater utility outages, and significant damages to roads/bridges across nine primary impacted counties. First responders performed swift water and air rescues for citizens trapped inside and atop vehicles, residences, businesses, and hospitals. Numerous rivers exceeded historic flood records and multiple dams over-topped or were under imminent threat of failure. Multiple evacuation orders were issued, two storm-related facilities are confirmed thus far, and dozens of individuals are still unaccounted for. (See attached Letter for additional information)

9. Description of the nature and amount of State and local or Indian tribal government resources which have been or will be committed. Include additional details in enclosed Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's cover letter.  
 On 9/26/2024, the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) elevated to a Level 4 (monitoring) to prepare for potential impacts from the remnants of tropical cyclone Helene and on 9/27/2024 at 12:00pm CDT, Tennessee declared a State of Emergency and the SEOC was elevated to a Level 3 (state of emergency) due to widespread life safety needs. The SEOC is currently staffed with representatives from the TN Department of Transportation, TN Department of Human Services, American Red Cross, TN National Guard, TN Department of Safety, TN Department of General Services, TN Department of Health, FEMA, and numerous other organizations. Local, state, national guard, and out-of-state response resources, including swift water rescue teams and helicopter rescue teams, have been deployed to assist with life saving efforts. The SEOC is currently coordinating 231 active resource requests and those requests continue to grow. (See attached Letter for additional information)

10. Joint Preliminary Damage Assessment\*

Individual Assistance    Dates Performed \_\_\_\_\_ Requested \_\_\_\_\_ Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

Individual Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)  
FEMA is sending a Rapid Assessment Team to begin assessments within impacted counties on October 1, 2024, in conjunction with local and state officials.

Public Assistance    Dates Performed \_\_\_\_\_ Requested \_\_\_\_\_ Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

Public Assistance Accessibility Problems (Areas that could not be accessed, and why)  
FEMA is sending a Rapid Assessment Team to begin assessments within impacted counties on October 1, 2024, in conjunction with local and state officials.

11. Programs and Areas Requested

Individual Assistance  N/A     Individuals and Households Program     Crisis Counseling Program     Disaster Unemployment Assistance  
 All     Disaster Case Management     Disaster Legal Services     Small Business Administration (SBA) Disaster Assistance

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)) If additional space is needed, please enclose additional documentation).  
Carter, Cocke, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington Counties

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes in the requested counties (if applicable).  
n/a

Please see **Enclosure A: Supplemental Information for Individual Assistance** for additional information in support of this request\*.  
\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Public Assistance  N/A  Debris Removal (Category A)  Emergency Protective Measures (Category B)  Permanent Work (Categories C-G)\* (not available for Emergency Declaration Requests)

For the following jurisdictions, specify programs and areas (counties, parishes, independent cities; for Indian tribal government, list tribe(s) and/or tribal area(s)). If additional space is needed or your request includes different categories of work for different jurisdictions; please enclose additional documentation.

Carter, Cocke, Grainger, Greene, Hamblen, Hawkins, Johnson, Unicoi, and Washington Counties

For States, identify Federally-recognized Tribes included in the requested counties (if applicable).  
n/a

Please see **Enclosure B: Supplemental Information for Public Assistance** for additional information in support of this request\*.

**Indemnification for Debris Removal Activity**

I do not anticipate the need for debris removal.

I anticipate the need for debris removal, which poses an immediate threat to lives, public health and safety. Pursuant to Sections 403 and 407 of the Stafford Act, 42 U.S.C. §§ 5170b & 5173, the State or Indian tribal government agrees to indemnify and hold  harmless the United States of America for any claims arising from the removal of debris or wreckage for this disaster. The State or Indian tribal government agrees that debris removal from public and private property will not occur until the landowner signs an unconditional authorization for the removal of debris.

**Request for Direct Federal Assistance**

I do not request direct Federal assistance at this time.

I request direct Federal assistance for work and services to save lives and protect property, and:

a. I request the following type(s) of assistance:

Assistance on debris removal operations to include technical monitoring and mentoring to affected areas. Additionally, water utility technical assistance may be requested.

b. List of reasons why State and local or Indian tribal government cannot perform, or contract for, required work and services. Ongoing needs from previous declarations has limited available resources for this type of assistance.

c. In accordance with 44 C.F.R. § 206.208, the State or Indian tribal government agrees that it will, with respect to direct Federal assistance: (1) Provide without cost to the United States all lands, easements, and rights-of-ways necessary to accomplish the approved work; (2) Hold and save the United States free from damages due to the requested work, and shall indemnify the Federal Government against any claims arising from such work; (3) Provide reimbursement to FEMA for the non-Federal share of the cost of such work in accordance with the provisions of the FEMA-State or FEMA-Tribe Agreement ; and (4) Assist the performing Federal agency in all support and local jurisdictional matters.

**Request for Snow Assistance**

N/A  I request snow assistance.

Snow assistance for the following jurisdictions (Specify counties, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas).

Please see **Enclosure D: Historic and Current Snowfall Data** for additional information in support of this request\*.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request

11. Programs and Areas Requested (Continued)

Hazard Mitigation\*  Statewide **OR**

For the following specific counties, parishes, independent cities or tribes and/or tribal areas.

12. Mitigation Plan Information\*

a. Mitigation Plan Expiration Date October 2, 2028 b. Type of Plan  Enhanced  Standard

13. Other Federal Agency Programs

I do not anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies  I do anticipate requirements from Other Federal Agencies

Please see Enclosure C: Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs for additional information in support of this request\*.

14. Findings and Certifications

I certify the following:

- a. I have determined that this incident is of such severity and magnitude that effective response is beyond the capabilities of the State and the affected local government or Indian tribal government and that supplementary federal assistance is necessary.
- b. In response to this incident, I have taken appropriate action under State or tribal law and have directed the execution of the State or Tribal Emergency Plan on Sep 27, 2024 in accordance with the Stafford Act.
- c. The State and local governments, or Indian tribal government will assume all applicable non-Federal share of costs required by the Stafford Act.

15. List of Enclosures and Supporting Documentation

- Cover Letter  Enclosure A (Individual Assistance)\*  Enclosure B (Public Assistance)\*
- Enclosure C (Requirements for Other Federal Agency Programs)  Enclosure D (Historic and Current Snowfall Data)
- Additional Supporting Documentation \_\_\_\_\_



Governor's or Tribal Chief Executive's Signature

9/30/2024

Date

If anyone except the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive signs this document, please provide the documentation that establishes that this individual has the legal authority to act on behalf of the Governor or Tribal Chief Executive.

\*Not Required for Emergency Declaration Request