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Governor Gregoire Proclaims Statewide Emergency for Winter Storms

OLYMPIA -- Gov. Chris Gregoire today proclaimed a state of emergency in Washington due to ongoing series of winter weather and storms across the state.

"A number of counties and cities are struggling to meet the problems posed by this month's onslaught of snow and winter weather. Snowfall has reached record or near-record level in 30 of the state's 39 counties," Gregoire said. "Many communities, especially in eastern Washington, are expecting as much as a foot or more of additional snow this holiday weekend. This proclamation will enable the state to respond quickly to local requests for emergency support and assistance arising from these new storms."

Gregoire's proclamation directs state government to support emergency response activities in the affected jurisdictions, allowing state agencies to make extraordinary expenditures and use of resources. State actions are coordinated through the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC) at Camp Murray.

As part of the proclamation, the governor has temporarily waived the rules that limit the number of hours that a truck driver can haul bulk milk from farms to dairies. Dairy cows continue to produce milk, which must be delivered to the dairy for processing within strict time limits. The waiver, which will be in effect for 10 days, will help ensure the delivery of this important commodity during the continuing storm, and will help the dairy industry avoid losses of nearly \$1 million per day if the milk is lost.

The proclamation also authorizes the activation of the Washington National Guard and the Washington State Guard. Maj. Gen. Timothy Lowenberg, state adjutant general, said the proclamation will enable the Washington National Guard to rapidly respond if emergency needs arise.

States of emergency have been declared in King, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston counties, the cities of Gig Harbor, Spokane, and Spokane Valley and by the Makah Tribe.

For more emergency information please visit www.wadisasternews.com
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