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Gov. Gregoire requests federal disaster declaration for flooding and slides

OLYMPIA—Gov. Chris Gregoire today asked President Obama to declare a federal disaster area in nine Washington counties impacted by flooding, mudslides and avalanches caused by severe weather earlier this month.

Gregoire requested federal assistance for Clark, King, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Snohomish, Thurston, and Wahkiakum counties. Damage surveys are continuing this week and the results are expected to add counties to the disaster declaration request.

Preliminary damage surveys conducted last week in the nine counties revealed 102 homes destroyed and another 2,340 homes with minor to major damage. In addition, there was significant damage to the agricultural community, including aqua-farming operations, as well as damage to several community water systems and many county roads.

“Last week’s surveys found widespread damage resulting from flooding, landslides and avalanches earlier this month. I know President Obama and his new administration will give this request prompt consideration so state and federal emergency officials can begin to provide recovery assistance to the thousands Washington residents affected by this disaster,” Gregoire said.

This disaster request seeks federal disaster assistance from the Individuals and Households Program (IHP), which is for families and individuals. As part of the request, the governor asked that the declaration include crisis counseling assistance and training, disaster unemployment assistance, U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans,

statewide Hazard Mitigation Program and U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency loans to farmers, ranchers and related businesses.

The governor will make separate disaster declaration requests for federal aid to repair damages to public facilities and infrastructure resulting from both the December 2008 snowfall and the January floods.

Gregoire added, "I also want to thank the Federal Emergency Management Agency Region 10 staff for their active role in helping the state to prepare this disaster request. Because of this cooperative effort on the preliminary damage assessment, I am confident that the federal government can act favorably on our disaster declaration request."

To view the Presidential request visit:

http://www.piersystem.com/posted/1105/Governor_s_Flood_Disaster_Declaration_Request_250185.pdf

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