



**RON DESANTIS**  
GOVERNOR

July 31, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
President of the United States  
The White House  
Washington, D. C.

Through: Gracia B. Szczech, Regional Administrator  
FEMA Region IV  
Federal Emergency Management Agency  
3003 Chamblee-Tucker Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30341

RE: Request for Emergency Declaration  
Hurricane Isaias

Dear Mr. President:

Under the provisions of Section 501 of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C §§5121-5207 (the "Stafford Act"), as implemented by 44 C.F.R. §206.35, I request that you declare a pre-landfall emergency for the State of Florida in anticipation of Hurricane Isaias. This request is timely under 44 CFR §206.35(a). I submit this request in anticipation of the impacts of Hurricane Isaias, which as of the most recent National Weather Service forecast includes potential impacts throughout South and Eastern Florida. Based upon current forecasts and modeling, I request an Emergency Declaration for the following counties in the State of Florida:

Brevard	Okeechobee
Broward	Orange
Clay	Osceola
Duval	Palm Beach
Flagler	Putnam
Indian River	Seminole
Martin	St. Johns
Miami Dade	St. Lucie
Monroe	Volusia
Nassau	

Hurricane Isaias originated as a tropical wave off the coast of Africa, becoming Potential Tropical Cyclone Nine at 11:00 am EDT on July 28, 2020 as it neared the Lesser Antilles. The system became Tropical Storm Isaias on July 29, 2020, in the eastern Caribbean Sea and was upgraded to a hurricane on July 31, 2020.

The current forecast from the National Hurricane Center indicates that Hurricane Isaias will pass very near or over the Florida East Coast on August 1 and 2, 2020. A Tropical Storm

Warning is in effect for 6 counties from Miami-Dade to Indian River County, with a Hurricane Watch in effect for 5 Florida counties from Palm Beach County northward through Brevard County. Additional Watches and Warnings from the National Hurricane Center will likely be issued for northern portions of the Florida East Coast by August 1, 2020.

Tropical storm force winds currently extend up to 205 miles from the storm's center. A storm of this size and strength has the potential to produce Tropical Storm force winds and hurricane force gusts along much of the Florida East Coast. Tropical Storm force winds could arrive in South Florida as early as Friday night or Saturday morning and spread northward late Saturday through Sunday.

Additionally, a storm of this magnitude on the forecast track could produce storm surge heights up to 2-4 feet above ground level along the Atlantic Coast of Florida and intracoastal waterways. Rainfall amounts of 2-5 inches are forecasted from the National Weather Service for much of the Florida Peninsula over the next 7 days. Rainfall amounts over the past two weeks have been above normal for this time of year across the majority of the state, particularly South Florida and the Florida Gulf Coast, with many areas experiencing 5-10 inches, or 200% above normal. Due to the saturation level of the ground, a tropical system affecting this region of Florida could quickly create urban and riverine flooding conditions and cause trees to become more susceptible to downing from gusty winds.

I request Direct Federal Assistance ("DFA") in order to meet pre-impact, critical emergency protection requirements that are beyond the capability of State and affected tribal and/or local governments. Additionally, given the threat and the complication of the overlay of DR 4486 (COVID-19) to this tropical event, I request financial assistance for eligible Category A and B expenses under FEMA's Public Assistance program.

The response to Hurricane Isaias comes after five consecutive hurricane seasons in which the State has been impacted by multiple million, and in some cases, multiple billion-dollar storms, all while in the midst of the largest disaster event managed by FEMA and the State of Florida, the COVID-19 Pandemic/Public Health Emergency. Every jurisdiction in the State of Florida has responded to and is currently recovering from at least three federally declared events in the past five years, with most actively recovering from four events. All counties are currently under state and federal declaration of emergency for the COVID-19 event.

In 2016, the State received a Major Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Hermine (DR 4280-FL) and 10 days later was declared for Hurricane Matthew (DR 4283-FL). For these two events State agencies reported \$43.3 million in expenditures. For Hurricane Hermine, FEMA has obligated in eligible costs over \$70 million and over \$473 million for Hurricane Matthew. In the 2017 hurricane season, the State of Florida received a Major Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Irma (DR 4337-FL), followed by Hurricane Nate (EM 3395-FL) shortly thereafter. Hurricane Irma was a category four hurricane that affected the entire State and resulted in the inclusion of all 67 counties in the Disaster Declaration. Following the Hurricane Nate declaration, Florida entered into a Host-State Agreement with FEMA to provide services to Hurricane Maria survivors from Puerto Rico. FEMA has since obligated over \$2.15 billion in eligible costs to jurisdictions to

recover from this event; however, hundreds of millions in costs remain unobligated, to include emergency work.

In the historic 2018 hurricane season, the Florida Panhandle and Big Bend Area received a Major Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Michael (DR 4399-FL), a category five hurricane. State agencies expended over \$140.9 million in support of local jurisdictions and individual survivors. The FEMA Joint Field Office estimates that it will obligate over \$3.5 billion for this event, but only \$1.14 billion has been obligated thus far. In 2019, the State was declared for Hurricane Dorian (DR 4468-FL). While costs are still being formulated, the State estimates that the total obligated costs will be over \$181.3 million, with only \$7.6 million being obligated thus far.

For the COVID-19 Pandemic/Public Health Emergency impacts, state agencies are reporting approximately \$1,487,000,000 in expenditures, which does not include county expenditures. While costs are still being formulated, the State had preliminarily estimated the total obligated costs would be approximately \$1.4 billion. This amount will clearly be exceeded with the Public Health Emergency recently being renewed and the State still being heavily involved in response activities to the event. The overlay of this tropical event to the COVID-19 Pandemic will stress the capabilities of the State to respond fully to the tropical event without the addition of the requested federal assistance.

On July 31, 2020, I issued Executive Order No. 20-181 which directed the State Coordinating Officer to execute the State's Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan in support of the Order in accordance with Section 501 of the Stafford Act. At the time of this Order and this request, 470,386 Florida residents have been diagnosed with COVID-19, over 26,533 have been hospitalized, and 6,843 have died as a result of the virus. Sheltering operations during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency require that Florida consider additional strategies to ensure that survivors are sheltered in a manner that does not increase the risk of exposure to, or further transmission of, COVID-19.

Evacuation and sheltering efforts in response to this tropical system will require regional coordination and longer lead times. A regional evacuation process will be used by state and county governments to manage and coordinate a multi-county evacuation. Medical evacuations and special needs operations are complicated by the additional safety requirements required as a result of COVID-19. Additional federal resources are needed to support such efforts. Emergency Support Function-8 has identified Assisted Living Facilities (ALFs) and Nursing Homes in the forecast cone who may need evacuation support as well as those in need of alternative power solutions to support their population should they lose electrical power. Alternate operational sites are also being researched and plans developed to address those ALFs and Nursing Homes who in light of the COVID event, have to make nontraditional arrangements for their patients' health and safety.

Local states of emergency have been declared in the following counties: Brevard, Flagler, Glades, Indian River, Martin, Monroe, Okeechobee, Orange, Osceola, Palm Beach and Seminole. With the uncertainty presented by Hurricane Isaias's track, many counties are also considering evacuations, especially of low lying, vulnerable and special needs populations, but have not yet issued such orders.

I have activated the State Emergency Operations Center at a Level 2 in response to the threat of Hurricane Isaias and the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) is coordinating preparation and response measures across the state. FDEM is also preparing to support operations upon request and activation of evacuation and shelter plans by the affected counties. Community Based Testing Sites for COVID-19 are being deactivated and secured in anticipation of the weather event. Hospitals and ALFs are preparing for the possible loss of power, while at the same time experiencing increased patient census numbers and actively responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic event.

FDEM is gathering resource needs from threatened counties and are planning points of distribution for not only critical resources such as water and food, but also personal protective equipment should the need for sheltering operations be identified. FDEM is also identifying, securing and coordinating non-congregate sheltering (NCS) options for counties who have a need to shelter those vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19. To date 50 such locations have been secured and stand ready to accept individuals who need to be housed in NCS facilities.

In order to save and protect lives, I request DFA in the form of personnel, mass care support, equipment, and supplies. Additionally, I request financial assistance in the form of reimbursement for eligible Category A and B expenses under FEMA's Public Assistance Program. Category A (debris removal) and Category B (emergency protective measures) support should be included in the emergency declaration to address the likely impacts of the tropical system. Specific to Category A, many of the threatened areas are low lying, coastal communities and are particularly susceptible to flooding and beach erosion. The mud, silt, sand, and debris that accumulates in these coastal communities will be significant should flooding result from this event as forecasted.

Emergency protective measures required as a result of this event will require extraordinary efforts of state and local government. With thousands of our citizens fighting COVID-19, we anticipate the need for shelters to be greater than usual, which results in increased resource requirements. Even healthy populations sheltered in traditional congregate shelters will require PPE and the implementation of mitigation measures against the spread of COVID-19 in such environments. Special needs shelters and isolation facilities will be used in greater numbers than for previous events due to the prevalence of COVID-19 in the State.

The State Emergency Response Team ("SERT") Chief requested that the following Federal agencies send a representative to the State Emergency Operations Center in support of these general capacities:

- Health and Human Services (HHS)
  - Mass Care support
  - Shelter support/staffing
  - Meals, water and food resources
- US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
  - Damage Assessment support
  - Pump Capacity

The Honorable Donald J. Trump  
July 31, 2020  
Page 5

- Power Generation Capacity
- US Coast Guard (USCG)
  - Technical assistance
  - Search and rescue support
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
  - Technical assistance
  - Resource and response support

I have designated Jared Moskowitz, Director of the Florida Division of Emergency Management, as the State Coordinating Officer for this emergency. He is authorized to provide any further information, assurances, requests, or justification on my behalf. I have designated Kevin Guthrie, Ashley Davis, and Allison McLeary as Governor's Authorized Representatives.

Sincerely,



Ron DeSantis  
Governor

Enclosures:  
Executive Order 20-181  
FEMA Form 010-0-13