

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 24-05

DECLARATION OF STATE OF EMERGENCY IN OREGON DUE TO A SEVERE WINTER STORM THAT INCLUDED HIGH WINDS, FLOODING, AVALANCHES, AND LANDSLIDES

Pursuant to ORS 401.165, I find that a threat to life, safety and property exists due to a severe winter storm that has caused a natural disaster across the State of Oregon.

Beginning Jan. 12, 2024, and continuing, this severe storm has brought cold temperatures, snow, freezing rain, high winds, flooding, landslides, avalanches and erosion at various locations throughout the state, resulting in power and communications outages and transportation disruptions. State, local, and tribal agencies continue to respond to requests for mass care and medical services and communications, evacuation and transportation assistance. Early damage assessment reports from jurisdictions include significant debris from damaged trees and infrastructure damage, and state agencies are reporting damage to state facilities. Multiple fatalities are suspected to be associated with the storm.

State agencies are coordinating with private sector and federal partners to address resource needs that cannot be met by state, local or tribal partners. Interstate mutual aid through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact is needed to bring in certified personnel to process data to find at-risk populations vulnerable during power outages. Federal waivers from the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration are needed to facilitate interstate travel and response for mutual aid assets for power restoration. These resources require a state declaration of emergency before they can be activated.

Power outages continue across the state with Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Hood River, Lane¹, Lincoln, Linn, Multnomah, Tillamook and Washington counties experiencing the brunt of the interruptions. Widespread damage and outages to commercial cellular, wireline, VoIP, broadband, and other telecommunications services has caused significant impacts to the public's ability to communicate and access the internet, including engaging with online government, telehealth, financial, e-commerce and other critical services. A loss of services for 911 and first responder communications networks in multiple areas has increased the threat to life-safety.

¹ Executive Order No. 24-04 was issued for Lane County on January 15, 2024 due to severe weather conditions and is specifically incorporated herein.



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The combination of power outages and transportation disruptions throughout the state has caused disruptions in drinking water and wastewater systems and numerous school closures. An inability to refuel emergency generators at critical communications sites has occurred due to debris, downed power lines and severe winter travel conditions. Hospital and emergency medical services are also experiencing limitations in the ability to provide services, while storm-related visits to emergency departments and urgent care centers for injuries, falls, and carbon monoxide poisoning have increased substantially.

Jurisdictions on the central and northern coasts and in the Willamette Valley, Cascades, and central and eastern Oregon have suffered the heaviest impacts of the storm. More than 70 missions for state assistance have been coordinated through the State Emergency Coordination Center. 211info has registered more than 160 warming shelters and weather respite centers statewide and received more than 3,200 calls across 25 counties for weather respite and transportation needs.

NOW, THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY DIRECTED AND ORDERED:

1. The Oregon Department of Emergency Management (ODEM) shall coordinate access to and use of personnel and equipment of all state agencies necessary to assess, alleviate, respond to, mitigate or recover from conditions caused by this emergency. ODEM shall coordinate all essential protective measures in support of identified disaster areas to protect lives, property and the environment. All Oregonians are to heed the direction of emergency officials with regard to this emergency in order to protect their safety.
2. The Oregon Department of Administrative Services, Oregon Department of Human Services, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Health Authority, Oregon Public Utility Commission, Oregon State Police, and other state agencies are directed to provide any assistance as requested by ODEM that is deemed necessary to assist in the response to this emergency and to provide all necessary support to statewide response, recovery and mitigation efforts.



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3. This determination of a severe winter weather emergency is statewide. It is not to be construed as a comprehensive declaration or proclamation of emergency for other purposes. It is limited to the use of state resources and personnel required by the emergency, to request assistance through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact, if needed, and to allow state agencies to suspend provisions of any order or rule of the agency if strict compliance with the provisions of the order or rule would in any way prevent, hinder or delay mitigating the effects of the severe winter weather emergency. Any local government requests for state resources must be submitted through county governing bodies to the ODEM pursuant to ORS Chapter 401.

This state of emergency shall exist until 11:59 p.m., January 26, 2024, unless extended or terminated sooner by the Governor.

Done at Salem, Oregon, this 19th day of January, 2024.

Tina Kotek
GOVERNOR

ATTEST:

LaVonne Griffin-Valade
SECRETARY OF STATE