STATE OF CONNECTICUT

GOVERNOR NED LAMONT

September 30, 2020

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Through: Mr. W. Russ Webster
Regional Administrator
Federal Emergency Management Agency
Region 1
99 High Street, 6th floor
Boston, MA 02110

Re: Request for Major Disaster Declaration for Tropical Storm Isaias

Dear President Trump:

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 (major disaster declarations requests), I request that you declare a major disaster for all eight Connecticut counties and two Tribal Nations as a result of Tropical Storm Isaias, which hit the state on August 4, 2020. The damaging winds and rain from the tropical storm resulted in over 750,000 power outages, some lasting for up to a week, hundreds of blocked/closed roads (600+), and damage to homes and infrastructure including hundreds of broken poles and damaged transformers. The nature of the damage was not consistent and suggested that hundreds of microbursts or local wind rotations added 10 – 20 mph to the recorded wind gusts**.** At least two reported fatalities and five serious injuries are attributed to the storm.

Specifically, I am requesting Public Assistance (PA) categories A through G, and Z[1], for all 8 Connecticut Counties: Fairfield, Hartford, Litchfield, Middlesex, New Haven, New London, Tolland, and Windham. I am also requesting these programs for the two Tribal Nations located in Connecticut, the Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation and the Mohegan Tribal Nation. I am also requesting implementation of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

[1] Public Assistance Program Category B, limited to direct federal assistance, was granted under the existing Tropical Storm Isaias Emergency Declaration EM 3535.

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State Law and Implementation of the State Emergency Plan:

The Division of Emergency Management and Homeland Security (DEMHS) began to coordinate preparations for the storm on July 31. I directed the execution of the State Emergency Operations Plan in accordance with Section 401 of the Stafford Act. Full activation of the State Emergency Operations Center for Tropical Storm Isaias began early on August 4. This activation was in addition to the ongoing activation of the SEOC since January 31, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. On August 5, 2020, I declared a civil preparedness emergency throughout the State pursuant to Section 28-9 of the Connecticut General Statutes (CGS). I also requested a Presidential Emergency Declaration, which was granted for Category B, limited to direct federal assistance, on August 6, 2020 (EM 3535).

I have determined that Tropical Storm Isaias was of such severity that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of state and local governments and supplemental federal assistance is necessary. As you will see from the narrative below, state and municipal agencies, volunteers and non-governmental organizations, pulled together to respond to the storm. But these same resources have been, and continue to be, in full response mode for COVID-19. The costs associated with this pandemic response, ongoing since January, in terms of both expenditures and in the human capabilities of local, state, tribal, and private sector partners, are unprecedented.

Effects of Tropical Storm Isaias on Connecticut:

The storm had significant effects across the state. See Attached Appendix A regarding storm details. Isaias felled approximately 8,800 trees onto power lines (many other trees fell in yards and streets without necessarily causing damage to power lines) according to the number of breaks in utility lines reported by the two major utilities (7,500 for Eversource, 1,336 for UI.) Public transportation was disrupted including a shutdown of the Metro North New Haven to Stamford rail line and Amtrak lines. The Connecticut State Police reported 5200 calls for service, with 246 motor vehicle accidents. There were over 90 state road closures, as well as significant damage to cameras and variable messaging signs across the state. Hundreds of local roads were blocked or otherwise closed throughout the state. The CT State Police had five troops and one major crime squad facility without power, including a dispatch center at Troop A. Both Troop A and another local dispatch center in the town of Thomaston had to have calls rerouted to another troop. Calls from a dozen other dispatch centers were also rerouted due to outages or damage. State parks were closed.

Over 75 long term care facilities lost street power, representing a third of the state total of nursing homes or skilled care facilities. The State's Emergency Support Function (ESF) 7 Resource Support activated its Fuel and Generator Task Force, and working with the United States Army Corps of Engineers, conducted 70 generator assessments and addressed numerous generator failures and other issues. With over 750,000 power outages, and thousands of downed trees and wires, 387,381 bottles of water and over 45,940 meals-ready-to-eat (MREs) were distributed. Hundreds of waste water and drinking water systems were affected, including priority issues at several housing developments. The State's Veterans Medical Center and indeed the entire campus was without street power, and needed generator and fuel assistance.

In addition to widespread and long term power outages, telecommunications systems suffered significant damage, affecting 40 to 60% of state's customers. Thirty percent of the state's AT&T network was affected, requiring the deployment of over 100 portable generators. FirstNet deployed mobile communications equipment to several communities. Frontier Communications had 39 offices running on

generator power. Verizon had over 300 towers on back-up power, with an additional 70 sites out of service altogether.

State and Local Resources Used to Alleviate the Impact of this Incident:

In response to the tropical storm and its effects, 138 of the state's 169 municipalities activated their local Emergency Operations Centers. At least 12 local governments declared states of emergency. Over 30 cooling/charging centers were opened across the state, following appropriate COVID-related precautions. Hundreds of volunteers operated these centers and provided other medical, shelter, and emergency management assistance. Twenty-four volunteer Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and 2 Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) Teams were activated to assist with the storm response and recovery. United Way 2-1-1 handled over 250 storm-related calls, mostly related to power outages and medical power needs. United Way passed the issues on to the appropriate utilities. Red Cross also helped to determine needs and provided assistance on alternate sheltering options in the COVID environment.

In addition to the ESF 7 activation described above, other ESF task forces activated in response to this storm included: ESF-2, Telecommunications Restoration; ESF-3, Interagency Debris Management; ESF-6, Mass Care; ESF-12, Utilities Restoration (Water and Energy).
The CT Military Department completed seven commodities distribution missions, and deployed route clearance teams to assist badly damaged areas. The Civil Air Patrol performed a flyover mission to assess damages. Hundreds of Department of Transportation (DOT) employees and contractors performed debris and repair work, while 27 DOT garages were without power. Hundreds of local responders worked to clear roads in each municipality across the state.

Preliminary Damage Assessment

Because of the ongoing pandemic, the joint FEMA/State Preliminary Damage Assessment (PDA) was completed virtually. While this was the first time that FEMA Region 1 was required to complete its PDA entirely virtually, the process was completed in a timely and safe manner. The PDA confirmed what the state Initial Damage Assessment had demonstrated—the state and all eight counties in Connecticut met and exceeded the minimum per capita indicators. See Enclosure B for details.

Disaster History

The State of Connecticut has managed Public Assistance, Individual Assistance and the Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grant Program for several disasters over the past ten years. In addition, the state continues to address ongoing response issues related to the COVID pandemic, which has resulted in over 57,000 positive cases, and 4,503 deaths as of September 28.

DR-4500, COVID-19 Pandemic, with an incident period of January 20, 2020 and continuing.
EM-3439.

DR-4410, Severe Storms and Flooding with an incident period of September 25-26, 2018. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated over $1,007,827 and ongoing.

DR-4385, Severe Storms, Tornadoes, and Straight-line Winds, with an incident period of May 15, 2018. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated $16,727,174.

DR-4213, Severe Winter Storm and Snowstorm, with an incident period of January 26-28, 2015. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated $9,603,757.

DR-4106 Severe Winter Storm and Snow Storm, with an incident period of February 8-11, 2013. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated $31,099.393.

DR-4087 Hurricane Sandy, with an incident period of October 27-November 8, 2012. Total Public Assistance Grant funds obligated $60,439,706. Total Individuals and Households Program funds approved $15,411,911.

Additionally, our State and local agencies, including non-governmental organizations worked together with FEMA Region 1 to address the needs of the over 1,200 families (FEMA registrants) that self-evacuated to Connecticut following Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017. The estimated number of American citizens assisted by Connecticut after those storms is about 15,000.

In summary, I am requesting a major disaster declaration for all eight Connecticut counties and two Tribal Nations, based on the impact of Tropical Storm Isaias, to include: Public Assistance (PA) categories B through G, and Category Z, as well as the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program.

I certify that for this major disaster, the state and local governments will assume all applicable non-federal shares of costs required by the Stafford Act.

I have designated Regina Y. Rush-Kittle as the Governor's Authorized Representative (GAR), William J. Hackett as State Coordinating Officer (SCO) and Brenda Bergeron as the alternate GAR and alternate SCO. They may provide further information or justification on my behalf, as requested or required.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Ned Lamont
Governor, State of Connecticut

cc: James C. Rovella, DESPP Commissioner
Regina Y. Rush Kittle, DESPP Deputy Commissioner
William J. Hackett, State Emergency Management Director

Enclosures

Appendix A: Effects of Tropical Storm Isaias in Connecticut
Encl. B: FEMA Damage Assessment Verification Chart
Encl C: Estimated Assistance from Other Federal Agency Programs

Separate Attachment

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

APPENDIX A: EFFECTS OF TROPICAL STORM ISAIAS IN CONNECTICUT

At 5:00 AM on August 3rd, tropical storm warnings were issued north along the U.S. East Coast *including the coast of Connecticut. Hurricane warnings were issued for the coast of South Carolina and North Carolina as Isaias was expected to strengthen back to a hurricane before landfall.

Isaias made landfall near the S.C. / N.C. border at 11:00 PM on August 3rd. Isaias then moved rapidly up the East Coast at 25 – 40 MPH. Isaias was supported by a strong jet stream and did not weaken significantly. Sustained winds for Isaias only dropped from 75 MPH at landfall to 65 MPH as the storm was approaching Connecticut 12 hours later, at 11:00 AM on August 4th.

The air mass over Connecticut was very moist and unstable. In addition, a large amount of wind shear (65 knots of bulk shear) was present. This wind shear significantly increased the risk for tornadoes. A tornado watch was issued for southern Connecticut at 7:25 AM and for northern Connecticut at 12:44 PM.

Winds began to increase in southwestern Connecticut at 11:00 AM. Several hundred power outages were reported almost immediately in Fairfield County. As winds started gusting above tropical storm force (40 MPH), power outages in Fairfield County and then the rest of western Connecticut started to quickly climb from 700 outages at noon to 30,000 by 2:00 PM. Wind gusts increased to near hurricane force (60 – 68 MPH) in Southwestern CT by 3:30 PM as power outages rapidly climbed to 280,000 by 4:00 PM. The near hurricane force wind gusts spread inland over the next 3 hours and power outages reached 500,000 by 7:00 PM. In addition, 4 tornado warnings were issued by the NWS for towns in Fairfield County, Middlesex County and Hartford County from 1:38 to 3:45 PM.

Winds began to subside below tropical storm force after 7:00 PM and most wind gusts dropped below 40 MPH by 8:00 PM. Heavy damage was reported across the state with hundreds of roads closed due to fallen trees and power lines. The damage consisted of hundreds of areas that suffered very heavy damage with lighter damage between them. **The nature of the damage was not consistent and suggested that hundreds of microbursts or local wind rotations added 10 – 20 MPH to the recorded wind gusts. Power outage reports continued to increase as reports were received. Power outages peaked at 752,225 at 8:00 AM on August 5th**.

Tropical storms such as Isaias could be expected once every 10 years. However the damage resulting from Isaias was more representative of a storm that might be expected once every 20 years. The heavier damage was likely the result of three factors:

1. It's been 8 years since the last major wind event that covered the entire state. Connecticut remains the top ranked state for our Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) with 72% of the state within the WUI.
2. Isaias was a very turbulent storm with hundreds of possible downbursts and local small rotations that enhanced the wind gusts in small tracks of a few hundred yards.
3. The due south wind direction is fairly rare and exposed more trees to the strong wind gusts.

Shown below are the 5 largest storms in terms of power outages in Connecticut since 1980. Tropical storm Isaias ranked number three.

Rank	Year	Storm	Total Outages	Average Gusts	Peak Gusts	
1.	2011	Irene	829,130	53 MPH	67 MPH	Fully
2.	2011	Alfred[1]	775,000	Wet Snow	NA	Fully
3.	**2020**	**Isaias[2]**	**752,225**	**58 MPH**	**68 MPH**	**Normal to**
4.	1985	Gloria	727,000	80 MPH	92 MPH	Dry Soils
5.	2012	Sandy	667,598	65 MPH	78 MPH	Normal

[1]*The name Alfred was assigned by a local media outlet.*
[2]*T.S. Isaias had a greater impact in terms of power outages than two more powerful storms (Super Storm Sandy and Hurricane Gloria) that had similar soil conditions.*

Three of these storms were similar to Isaias in terms of area coverage: 1) Super Storm Sandy; 2) Tropical Storm Irene, and; 3) Hurricane Gloria. All three storms affected most of the state with strong winds.

WIND DAMAGE ANALYSIS

The reduced weakening rate of Tropical Storm Isaias was due to the strong upper jet support (similar to a strong winter storm) and therefore Isaias gaining extra-tropical type characteristics (frontal structures with frontogenetic heavy rain on its western "cool" side and enhanced/expanded low-level jet on its eastern/northeastern "warm" sector). It is more common for tropical cyclones to encounter this type of support and transition tracking up into the Northeast, then of course farther south.

This "hybridization" of Isaias, and track of Isaias to the west of CT, helped to bring in a moist, unstable and highly sheared air mass on a 70-75kt low level Jetstream over the state. This low level Jetstream supported higher than typical wind gusts usually associated with a purely tropical system, and enhanced the damaging wind and tornadic potential with any convective elements (discrete low topped heavy downpours) that occurred.

Isaias felled approximately 8,800 trees onto power lines (many other trees fell in yards and streets without causing damage to power lines) according to the number of breaks (7,500 for Eversource, 1,336 for UI) in utility lines reported by Eversource and UI during the storm. The maximum wind gust recorded in Connecticut that was not attributed to a tornado was 68 MPH at Bridgeport.

ENCLOSURE B TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Requirements for Public Assistance
Stafford Act

CATEGORY

County	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
Fairfield Co	$4,720,965	$253,388	$4,350	$0	$12,854	$9,330	$13,354	$5,014,241
Hartford Co	$3,489,762	$725,062	$3,900	$0	$250,000	$0	$4,200	$4,472,925
Litchfield Co	$1,462,106	$73,410	$0	$0	$0	$56,098	$0	$1,591,614
Middlesex Co	$988,349	$155,599	$0	$0	$0	$0	$3,275	$1,147,222
New Haven Co	$4,547,853	$668,205	$13,318	$0	$260,000	$482,602	$8,730	$5,980,709
New London Co	$1,069,382	$271,592	$0	$0	$19,899	$526,539	$0	$1,887,411
Tolland Co	$632,313	$133,099	$0	$0	$3,840	$0	$0	$769,252
Windham Co	$414,936	$87,320	$0	$0	$0	$7,341	$0	$509,596
Totals:	$17,325,667	$2,367,674	$21,568	$0	$546,593	$1,081,910	$29,559	$21,372,970

Note: Estimates are to reflect total eligible costs before any cost sharing.

ENCLOSURE C TO MAJOR DISASTER REQUEST

Estimated Assistance from Other Federal Agency Programs

County	SBA Home Loans	SBA Business Loans	FSA Loans	NRCS	FHWA	USACE	BIA	OTHER
Middlesex	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	N/A	TBD
New London	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Hartford	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Tolland	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Windham	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
New Haven	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Litchfield	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Fairfield	N/A	N/A	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Totals			TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Note: *Provide numbers and amounts, as appropriate.*