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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
October 24, 2005

Statement on Federal Disaster Assistance for Florida from Hurricane Wilma

The President today declared a major disaster exists in the State of Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Wilma beginning on October 23, 2005, and continuing.

The President's action makes Federal funding available to affected individuals in a 3 county area. The counties include Collier, Lee, and Monroe Counties.

Assistance can include grants for temporary housing and home repairs, low-cost loans to cover uninsured property losses, and other programs to help individuals and business owners recover from the effects of the disaster.

Federal funding is available to State and eligible local governments on a cost-sharing basis in the counties of Brevard, Broward, Charlotte, Collier, DeSoto, Glades, Hardee, Hendry, Highlands, Indian River, Lee, Martin, Miami-Dade, Monroe, Okeechobee, Osceola, Palm Beach, Polk, St. Lucie, and Sarasota for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct Federal assistance, at 75 percent Federal funding.

For a period of up to 72 hours, Federal funding is available at 100 percent of the total eligible costs for debris removal and emergency protective measures, including direct Federal assistance.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures statewide.

R. David Paulison, Acting Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, named Justin DeMello as the Federal Coordinating Officer for Federal recovery operations in the affected area.

The Agency said that more counties and additional forms of assistance may be designated after assessments are fully completed in the affected areas.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: FEMA (202) 646-4600.

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