

The White House

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

September 03, 2011

President Obama Signs Massachusetts Disaster Declaration

The President today declared a major disaster exists in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and ordered Federal aid to supplement commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area affected by Tropical Storm Irene during the period of August 27-29, 2011.

The President's action makes federal funding available to affected individuals in the counties of Berkshire and Franklin.

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 also is available to commonwealth and eligible local governments and certain private nonprofit organizations on a cost-sharing basis for emergency work and the repair or replacement of facilities damaged by Tropical Storm Irene in Berkshire and Franklin Counties.

Federal funding is also available on a cost-sharing basis for hazard mitigation measures for all counties in the commonwealth.

W. Craig Fugate, Administrator, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), Department of Homeland Security, named James N. Russo as the Federal Coordinating Officer for federal recovery operations in the affected area.

FEMA said additional designations may be made at a later date if requested by the state and warranted by the results of further damage assessments.

FEMA said that residents and business owners who sustained losses in the designated counties can begin applying for assistance tomorrow by registering online at <http://www.DisasterAssistance.gov> or by calling 1-800-621-FEMA(3362) or 1-800-462-7585 (TTY) for the hearing and speech impaired. The toll-free telephone numbers will operate from 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. (local time) seven days a week until further notice.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION MEDIA SHOULD CONTACT: FEMA NEWS DESK AT (202) 646-3272 OR FEMA-NEWS-DESK@DHS.GOV