



OREGON OFFICE OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

December 2015 Pacific Storm Event State Declaration Fact Sheet

Background

A severe storm beginning on Dec. 6, 2015, caused heavy rains, high winds, flooding, landslides, and erosion in many parts of Oregon, resulting in critical transportation failures, loss of power and communications capabilities, property and infrastructure damage, and evacuations and sheltering needs. The complex storm systems caused damages to state highways throughout affected communities with scour, washouts, sinkholes, debris flows and mudslides.

Declaration Process

As an emergency develops, local resources are mobilized to respond. As they respond, private sector resources, mutual aid from neighboring communities, and volunteer organizations supplement response efforts. Once local resources are overwhelmed, local governments can declare a local emergency and request assistance from the state. The Governor then declares a state of emergency and makes state resources available to assist impacted local governments. OEM then coordinates with local jurisdictions to [assess damages and determine losses](#) and recovery needs. If the impacts exceed certain criteria and thresholds, various federal disaster assistance programs may be requested by the Governor.

State Declaration

- The Governor can declare a state of emergency under authority granted in Oregon Revised Statutes (ORS) Chapter 401.165.
- On Dec. 10, 2015 Governor Brown declared a state of emergency in 13 Oregon counties including Benton, Clackamas, Clatsop, Columbia, Lane, Lincoln, Linn, Marion, Multnomah, Polk, Tillamook, Washington and Yamhill.
- On Dec. 14, 2015 Governor Brown verbally added six more counties to the state emergency declaration including Coos, Curry, Douglas, Jackson, Josephine and Klamath.
- This is the mechanism in which state resources including, but not limited to, personnel, equipment and facilities can be provided to the counties to prevent or alleviate hardships and damages.
- The state emergency declarations enable declared counties to request resources from the state to address storm impacts.
- This declaration also allows Oregon to request assistance from the [Federal Highway Administration's \(FHWA\) Emergency Relief Program](#).