

STATE OF ALASKA
DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, beginning November 30, 2020, a complex weather system producing record rainfall, which continues, and has triggered landslides, mudslides, and flooding across Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the most severe impacts were multiple large-volume landslides and widespread flooding within the City of Haines and surrounding areas of the Haines Borough, resulting in several missing persons, several destroyed and severely-damaged homes, community evacuations and sheltering of residents and at-risk persons, severe damage to local roads and highways, and severe impacts to community water, power, and communication utilities; and;

WHEREAS, additional storm-related mudslide, landslide, and flooding damages have been reported in the communities of Gustavus, Hoonah, Hyder, Juneau, Petersburg, Skagway, Tenakee Springs, and Wrangell so far, and a full assessment of all damages throughout the affected area has not yet been completed; and,

WHEREAS, the following conditions exist as a result of this disaster: robust interagency search and rescue operations, and other immediate State response assistance needed to alleviate threats; severe damage to highways, roads, drainage systems, power supply, and communications networks; citizens stranded by floodwaters and landslides necessitating rescue; evacuation of residents; damage to personal and real property; damage to local road systems blocking access to communities and residents, necessitating emergency protective measures and temporary repairs; and,

WHEREAS, additional rainfall is expected over the next week that could remobilize saturated and unstable slopes, and likely cause additional landslide and flooding impacts, and these factors will likely hamper on-going rescue, relief, and recovery efforts, as well as endanger responders; and,

WHEREAS, the Haines Borough and City of Gustavus have each issued local declarations of disaster emergency as a result of this storm, and have sought state and/or federal disaster assistance to recover from this event, and


WHEREAS, the severity and magnitude of this emergency are beyond the timely and effective response and recovery capability of local resources, and there are insufficient regularly appropriated local funds to cover these requirements.

THEREFORE, on this 5th day of December 2020, under the authority granted by Alaska Statute 26.23.020(c), I hereby declare that a condition of disaster emergency exists in the entire Southeast Region of Alaska to include Haines Borough, Municipality of Skagway Borough, City and Borough of Juneau, City and Borough of Wrangell, Petersburg Borough, City and Borough of Sitka, Ketchikan Gateway Borough, and the Annette Island, Chatham, and Southeast Island Regional Education Attendance Areas (REAs), and this condition is of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant a disaster declaration in order to provide assistance. In addition, as an appropriate life-safety decision, I hereby suspend compliance with all state environmental permitting requirements, in accordance with the authority granted by AS 26.23.220 (g)(1), for the duration of the effective date of this proclamation.

FURTHER, the Commissioner of the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA) is hereby authorized to utilize funds made available for these purposes that are considered necessary for disaster assistance, to include disaster Public Assistance and necessary administrative and disaster management expenses. State funds are proposed to be spent under AS 26.23.020(i) and (k) and AS 26.23.050. The Commissioner of DMVA, or his designee, is the designated State Coordinator; and is further authorized to task, as necessary, State departments and agencies in accordance with the State Emergency Operations Plan; and is further authorized to exercise, as necessary, the provisions provided under Alaska Statutes 26.23.020(g)(1), (2), (3), (5), (6), (7) and (9).

FURTHER, I specifically order the suspension of those provisions of Alaska Statutes and regulations relating to any requirement for the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to: (a) obtain a lease from another state agency prior to entry upon the land; (b) obtain a permit, including land use permits and right-of-way permits, from another state agency prior to entry upon land; (c) obtain water use permits or rights, including temporary rights, from another state agency prior to utilizing such resources; (d) obtain fish habitat permits or special area permits, from another state agency; (e) obtain wastewater disposal permits, from another state agency; (f) obtain Section 106 Reviews pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 from another state agency; provided that the foregoing suspensions do not apply to any specific provision the suspension of which would create a violation of federal law or a violation of a requirement for the provision of federal emergency funding, and the foregoing suspensions may be supplemented by my further order to the director of the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management and the Commissioner of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

By:



Mike Dunleavy
Governor