



Governor Mike Dunleavy STATE OF ALASKA

September 20, 2022

The Honorable Peter Micciche
Senate President
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 111
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Louise Stutes
Speaker of the House
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 208
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

President Micciche and Speaker Stutes:

On September 17, 2022, I declared a state disaster emergency for Bering Strait Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA), Lower Yukon REAA, Lower Kuskokwim REAA, and the Kashunamiut REAA following the recent severe sea storm that impacted the west coast of Alaska beginning September 15, 2022. The state declaration authorizes funds be made available for the State's disaster Individual and Public Assistance programs, as well as necessary administrative and disaster management expenses.

The 2022 September West Coast Storm Disaster caused widespread and severe threats to life and property beginning on September 15, 2022 and continuing through September 20, 2022. This disaster began with a storm of such magnitude that the National Weather Service (NWS) predicted it would be the strongest storm in over a decade, surpassing the 2011 Bering Sea Superstorm, also known as the 2011 West Coast Storm, and was likely to surpass the next largest storm to hit the Nome area back in 1974. The duration of the storm surge was long, between 12 and 24 hours, allowing ample time to cause flood damage to homes and other structures. Significant coastal flooding was expected along with high seas and considerable storm surge. The coastline from Scammon Bay to Cape Lisburne in the North Slope Borough, a disaster of approximately 1,200 miles, was placed under a flood watch on September 14, 2022.

The current storm was especially noteworthy. By September 17, 2022, the 937 millibar storm had produced 92 mph wind gusts, 52-foot-high sea waves, and 10-foot storm surges above Mean Higher High Water (MHHW) along Norton Sound. The City of Nome recorded a record 8.99 feet above MHHW on September 17, 2022. NWS believes the incident period for this storm is September 15, 2022, the first arrival of the storm into the Aleutian Islands, to cancellation of the last weather alert on September 20, 2022.

This storm has caused substantial damage to both public infrastructure and private residences. Current cost estimates for this disaster are not known at this time, but there are several damaged facilities, seawalls, and other infrastructure. For comparison purposes, the preliminary damage

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assessment for the 2011 West Coast Storm, declared a federal disaster DR-4050-AK, found almost \$8.5 million in Public Assistance costs and another \$21.5 million in road damages eligible for U.S. Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) funding. The current storm has the potential to exceed these costs.

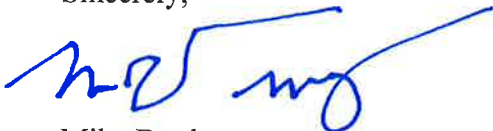
Funds from the Disaster Relief Fund should be used to cope with this disaster as infrastructure repairs and emergency response are critical to prevent serious threats to life, public health, and public safety.

The total estimated disaster-related permanent response and recovery costs for this disaster have not yet been quantified but are likely to be in the millions of dollars. Therefore, I request your concurrence to increase the funding limitation for this disaster to \$10 million from the Disaster Relief Fund (DRF) pursuant to Alaska Statute (AS) 26.23.020(i) and (k), and per AS 26.23.025(a), and this letter serves as the initial finance plan. The current balance of the DRF is \$46,388,010.99 and a supplemental appropriation is not required at this time. I further request your concurrence that a special session should not be convened as authorized under AS 26.23.020 (k)(2)(B).

I will be submitting a request for federal assistance for this disaster. If approved, the federal government, through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), would provide supplemental federal assistance to help respond and recover from this disaster. Once a determination is made by the President on federal assistance for this disaster, I will provide a revised finance plan in accordance with A.S. 26.23.020 (k).

A copy of the disaster declaration is included for your information.

Sincerely,



Mike Dunleavy
Governor

Enclosure: Declaration of Disaster Emergency

cc: The Honorable Click Bishop, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Bert Stedman, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Neal Foster, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State House of Representatives
The Honorable Kelly Merrick, Finance Committee Co-Chair, Alaska State House of Representatives
The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, District S, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Donny Olson, District T, Alaska State Senate
The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky, District 38, Alaska State House of Representatives
Neil Steininger, Director, Office of Management and Budget
Aimee Bushnell, Deputy Legislative Director, Office of the Governor