

NEWS RELEASE



Governor Bob Taft

SEVENTEEN COUNTIES ELIGIBLE FOR SNOW REMOVAL REIMBURSEMENT Presidential Emergency Declaration Covers Costs During First 48 Hours of December Winter Storm

COLUMBUS (January 11, 2005) – Governor Bob Taft announced today that local government entities in 17 counties may apply for financial assistance to offset eligible costs incurred during the severe winter storm December 22-24, 2004. President George Bush's emergency declaration for these counties clears the way for affected governments in these counties to seek reimbursement.

"Ohioans and their communities have shown a tremendous amount of patience with this weather and the state will continue to do everything possible to help people recover from continued severe winter storms," Taft said. "The cost of snow removal has been a financial burden to local governments, and thanks to President Bush, they can now receive some financial help for their efforts."

The Presidential Emergency Declaration makes federal funding specifically for snow removal operations available to the State and eligible local governments in the following counties: Butler, Champaign, Clark, Darke, Delaware, Franklin, Greene, Hamilton, Hardin, Logan, Madison, Miami, Montgomery, Preble, Shelby, Union, and Warren.

On December 30, 2004, Taft requested a Presidential Emergency Declaration through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which allows local and state governmental entities and qualified non-profit organizations to be reimbursed up to 75 percent of their cost for eligible emergency expenses from the December winter storm. Examples of these costs include overtime for public safety forces, rental of equipment, removal of health and safety hazards, activation of National Guard troops and other costs directly related to protecting public health and safety during the first 48 hours of the storm. Taft's request was based on record snow levels and local government needs during a continuous 48 hour period.

Gov. Taft's state of emergency declaration for 56 counties allows state resources to be used to assist local government. The State of Ohio Emergency Operations Center is open and coordinating 66 missions among local and state governments as needed.

The counties under a gubernatorial state of emergency for continued severe winter weather are: Allen, Ashland, Athens, Auglaize, Belmont, Brown, Butler, Champaign, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Coshocton, Crawford, Darke, Delaware, Fairfield, Fayette, Franklin, Greene, Guernsey, Hamilton, Hardin, Henry, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Huron, Jefferson, Knox, Licking, Logan, Madison, Marion, Mercer, Meigs, Miami, Monroe, Montgomery, Morgan, Morrow, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pickaway, Pike, Preble, Richland, Ross, Seneca, Shelby, Tuscarawas, Union, Warren, Washington, Wayne and Wyandot counties

###

Contact: Orest Holubec, Governor's Press Secretary, at (614) 644-0957; or
Rob Glenn, Ohio EMA, at (614) 799-3695.